SPACE LAW: BY HAROLD GLUCK PH.D.

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION

OCT 1959

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IN THE GLOWING RUINS, THOSE WHO WOULD LIVE ALSO GLOWED

THE WORLD HE LEFT BEHIND

by Robert Silverberg

OMORROW'S ROTHERS

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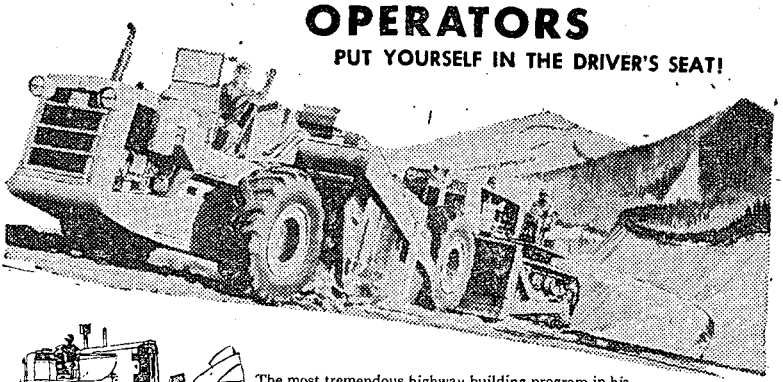

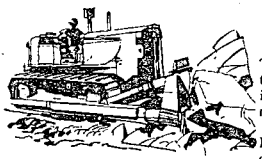

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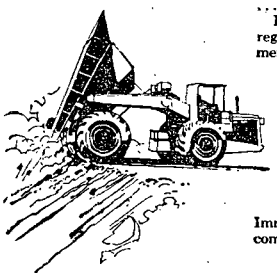

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FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION

No. 45
October,
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SPECIAL ARTICLE

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Editor: ROBERT A. W. LOWNDES DOROTHY B. SEADOR, Asso. Ed.

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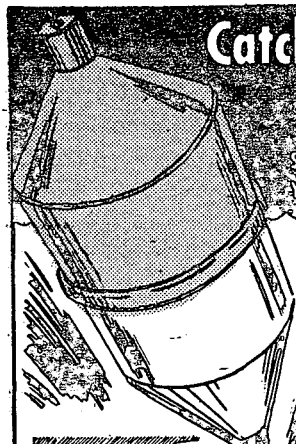

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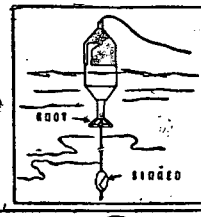

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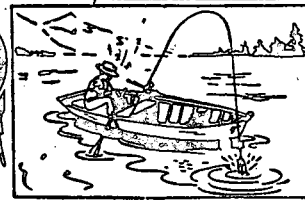

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Tomorrow's Brothers

by Ed. M. Clinton, Jr.

illustrated by EMSH

In the glowing ruins, there was a great need for the glowing immunes. But when would they be able to live as men and women again?

LOS ANGELES had been a desert that Man once made to bloom. But three years of war lay between the neon blossoms and today; and at night an evil, flickering light coruscated over vast reaches of the same desert returned to its own. This as well, thought Peter Sands as he walked wearily across the road to the cafeteria, Man had done.

Sometimes in the night he, too, g l o w e d—especially his hands; but it was a long while since this had bothered him. There had been a time when he would wake up at night and begin screaming at the sight of the ten little wriggling lights

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"You don't have to be violent," she gasped. "I won't say no . . ."

at the ends of his arms. But no more.

The sign over the cafeteria entrance was painted, and said simply: SOUTHWEST RADIATION DEFENSE COMMAND, FOOD CENTER 38. He pushed through the swinging doors.

It was just past supper hour, but the room, never too large, was still crowded. The others wore uniforms like his, casual in style, with the gamma symbol on each shoulder. Besides the uniforms, there was another universal characteristic, an impossibility that would have caught the immediate attention of anyone a few years before,

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but which was now just a fact of everyday life: Nowhere in the room was there black hair, or brown or red. Male and female, they were all blond. It was not that all the light-haired lived, but rather that some of them did and none of the others ever did. And so, when Peter Sands walked in, he was just another blond janitor.

HE HURRIED over to the serving line, growing quickly longer with other blond, uniformed gamma wearers. For most of them, Peter Sands included, supper was overdue. They had been held up by the meeting.

The line moved slowly. The food, approaching, looked as unappetizing as ever. It was wartime food, the kind of pottage served up in times of disaster. Disaster had been the state of the world for three years now.

He thought about the meeting, and his first feeling was one of utter contempt, the revulsion that always came when Colonel MacAfee came to mind. Command by remote control: MacAfee safely on the other side of the leaded wall, his image projected on the life-size screen, as on his side were the image and sounds of the gathered members of the XVIII Decontamination Corps.

Even with the food. He had arrived at the steam counter, and behind it was the inevitable lead wall. Everywhere, shut off from their fellows, trapped in the most absolute ghetto ever conceived, as tangible in its lead fixtures as it was without finite limitation. It was a barrier you carried with you; if there were no lead wall, then the warning thundered by your uniform set up a leadless barrier that was just as absolute, just as impenetrable, thirty feet from wherever you walked.

"Didn't I see you in the meeting just now?"

SO CONDITIONED was he to not hearing a woman's voice—because the law was that women and men of the Decontamination Corps could not speak to one another—that he almost jumped at the words. Then, of course, he remembered that it was all right. Colonel MacAfee, smiling—

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damn his smile, his little mustache, his aura of respect—had said it was all right, now. They were happy to tell the people of the Decontamination Corps that mutations, it had been established, were not likely...

He turned, hardly sure of what to say. She was not especially pretty; she was perhaps thirty. Her uniform was as his. Would this change, now—would this concession to the existence of sex even among the janitors—be made too?

"Yes," he said. "I usually leave as quickly as possible. I don't like to look at MacAfee's face." He began ladling food. There was no service; only a single monitor, blond too, stood to one side, his job to ensure that there was no greediness. There weren't enough people, let alone among the immunes, to provide that kind of service; and the manufacture of such automatic devices as might have acomplished the task had been abandoned as unessential more than two years past.

She filled her tray behind him. "I suppose they'll let us really remember we're boys and girls again, now."

He nodded, mute. He realized he was being rude, but he was at a complete loss how otherwise to act. Having reached the end of the potatoes and the synthetic meat, and picking up a scoop of gelatin, he headed toward an empty table. She followed him over.

HE WENT to the ersatz-coffee machine, and had started back with his paper cup, when it occurred to him that she had not gotten any; he halted, returned to the machine, and procured a second cup. Sugar and cream were unheard of, even forgotten, luxuries.

"Thank you," she said, relishing his courtesy, as he put the steaming, murky concoction on the table in front of her.

They ate in silence for a while. Finally, frowning, he said, "You've been out recently." Even in the bright light of the cafeteria, a suffusion of iridescence was detectable around her head, and the little hairs on her wrist were stiff and upright.

"Yes. San, Diego."

"Didn't know they were still

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trying to clean up down there."

She continued eating, picking disinterestedly at the make-believe meat, and he studied the stiff passivity of her face. It was the first time he had talked to a woman in almost two years. The conversation could not help but turn on their work. All the same, he felt that at any moment one of the masked Air Force guards, standing at the far end of the cafeteria in their lead-impregnated uniforms, would descend upon them, stop the conversation, arrest them.

"There are a few things down there they'd like to get out. The big computer that went in just before the war—easier to repair it than to build another."

"Easier, hell," he snarled, trying not to taste the pasty quality of the salad. "They couldn't make another one if they had to."

THEY LAPSED into awkward silence. The cafeteria had begun to empty.

Suddenly she leaned forward on her arms and said, "Do you feel as strange as I do?"

"You mean, talking to you? Talking to a woman? I keep expecting trouble, if that's what you mean." He shrugged and scooped up some lumpy mashed potatoes. "The guards may not know about the change yet, you know."

"Yes, that. The talking to each other." She leaned closer, her eyes wide. "Is that man staring at me?" A flick of her eyebrow directed his attention to the table just slightly to her left and behind her.

A big, handsome Corpsman sat alone at the table, dallying over the remnants of his meal. When Peter Sands looked at him, their eyes locked for a moment, Sands passive, the other defiant. Then the other man dropped his eyes toward his plate.

"Yes," said Sands to the girl.

She looked down; he noted that there were streaks of gray, quietly lost in the blonde curls. "He doesn't have to stare. I wouldn't say no. My God, I wouldn't say no!" Her head straightened and she was looking into his eyes. "I never thought I could know such loneliness!"

Peter Sands' stomach jumped

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into a knot, a reaction part embarassment, part compassion. "Damn them," he said, "today was too much." He tightened his left hand into a balled fist.

She shrugged. "We're better off now, at least." She smiled at Sands, a dazzling instant of femininity in aching contrast to the neuterism imposed by her uniform. "Relax, friend. Don't be so bitter."

THE COFFEE was hot and, as always, tasteless in his mouth. "Too much. Just too much. Now, to be like a...a stud..."

"My name is Anita Lait," she said, almost irrelevantly, clearly impatient with his failure to inquire. "I should think you would prefer that to eternal celibacy."

"He's leaving," Sands said, nodding toward the other man.

The swinging doors swooshed shut behind the departing Corpsman. The lights flicked out over the steam counter. They were the only people remaining in the cafeteria.

"Tell me your name," she said, "and then tell me how they found *you*."

"Peter Sands. They found me because I lived through it. I'm sorry that I did."

"Come, come, Peter, that's not..."

The air was suddenly filled with a sound that, for all the horror that it implied, no longer affrighted, that had become simply a pushbutton for an automatic sequence of actions. The sound started like a lazy giant's reluctant grumble and became a high, bulky shriek that settled, with perfectly maddening precision, at just the wrong pitch. It stabbed his ears and hurt his back.

Without a word they rose and moved rapidly across the empty cafeteria, pushed through the door, and started toward the shelter entrance. There was a shelter every hundred yards along the road that was the camp.

ALREADY all the lights in the area were out. But this was a ritual, needless and without effect; the programmed accuracy of the attacker's weapons was enough; had it not been, the hideous man-made aurora undulated into the

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sky from thirteen distinct points on the horizon lighting everything more clearly than a full moon. It had a sinister beauty; but the beauty, like much of the menace, had ceased to have any meaning for Peter Sands. Like music too often played—like grief too often recounted—like death too often seen, it merged in its ordinariness with the ever-present expected.

A steady stream of Corpsmen moved down the road toward the shelter entrance. Many carried their crowns, their halos, the cockade of the untouchables; legs and fingers glowing, heads scintillating. The gamma men, the janitors. *Clean up men's messes behind them,* thought Peter Sands. *Am I my brother's keeper!*

The tube-car inside the entrance was jammed with people, and dropped to discharge its load in the shelter below even as Sands and Anita Lait approached. It was a little darker inside, waiting for the car to return, but Sands could see every feature of the girl's face in its own flickering light.

"Hot stuff in San Diego, I see," he said.

"Go on with your story. The story you really didn't start," she replied steadily.

The tube-car returned and they crowded in with others. A mechanical voice, loud and certainly audible for a hundred yards, shouted: *"Last load. Thirty seconds. Last load."*

A FEW PEOPLE, still outside the shelter, ran. They did not all make it. The tube-car dropped like a bullet, and Sands felt his miserable dinner surge in protest in his stomach, wanting out. He squeezed down the nausea. Above, the immense concrete superstructure folded over, shielding the shelter against the outside.

"We'll be busy tomorrow, I daresay," said Anita, looking up and watching the fingers of the seal come together like an Olympian handclasp, falling upward as the tube-car moved.

The car squealed to a stop and they were carried out with the crowd into the main area of the shelter. A voice, mechanical and grating through loudspeakers, indistinguishable in any quality from the one at the shelter entrance, chattered a ceaseless flow of information

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from outside. "The attack appears to be a cluster of Dirty Missiles launched from the enemy's Central American facility. The Commanding General has warned all members of the Decontamination Corps to be ready for immediate full-scale effort when the all-clear sounds. Repeat: Decontamination Corps personnel should stand by for immediate assignment at all-clear."

The air-raid shelter had changed little in nature or appearance since World War II. Now it was deeper below ground, more heavily reinforced; it had its own powerplant and air-generating equipment but it was still a place of hard benches and dankness, of dull lights and most of all of incipient claustrophobia. It was as though the character of the sheltered imprinted itself upon the shelter itself.

"COME, PETER," said Anita Lait, and her voice had softened as though, unbelievably, she found some sense of meaning within the hard walls of the shelter. "Let's find a place where we can talk." She reached out and slid her hand into his and, convulsively, he grasped it.

"The first cluster of missiles has fallen on Riverside..." the loudspeaker was saying.

"Why can't they just go back to good old nuclear bombs? Nice big bangs?" growled Peter. "Then they'd just smash things up for good and all, and be done with it."

"You know as well as I that they'd like to. The last time they tried was two months after the war began. Remote detonation defense ended that forever."

They sat down, remarkably alone, in a corner of the shelter. The voice of the loudspeaker muttered on.

"Funny thing about myself is," said Anita, "I would never have been found if I hadn't tried to kill myself. Two years ago. The big raid on Minneapolis. Do you remember? Or did news of it get out here? I decided, the hell with it, life's no good any more, so I stayed out of the shelter on purpose. They dropped Element 289 that night. A merciful type, you know. Kills in less than three hours. I got a regular dose of it. But here I am. A Decon-

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tamination Crew found me walking around the next morning and brought me in."

"I did that once. Rescued an immune. Never again; I've let a lot go since then."

"Foolish, you know." She pulled him toward her, roughly. "For God's sake, kiss me, Peter, and make me remember I'm a woman again!"

HE REALIZED, suddenly, that this *was* a woman he was talking to; he had been somehow aware of it as a fact only until then, as a depersonalized observation. With a sense almost of guilt at this, he complied; at first that was all it was, compliance with her simple need, but after a moment he was frenzied.

"A cluster of Mark 93 Anti-Missiles has been launched from our Sequoia Launching Site. General Headquarters has just issued the following statement..."

He pulled away, exhausted by the unexpected expenditure of a forgotten kind of energy.

"I believe you've cut my lip," said Anita Lait tremulously, exploring with the tip of her tongue at blood that welled from the side of her mouth.

"Forgive me."

She laughed. "For what?"

"I'd forgotten what it was to be a man," he muttered. "It's been so long. You can't live apart, you can't be a slave ...you can't be utterly without purpose for years and preserve anything...human... any manhood..." He discovered he no longer had her hand, and he reached out and fumbled until he found it. "I had a lovely wife," he said. "A lovely, raven-haired wife. Now I don't even have a picture of her. And two children."

"The dark ones die. Dark ones are so lovely," said Anita sadly.

"When they blew up Los Angeles, I lost her. They wouldn't let me see her afterward. And I'm glad. She wasn't so lovely any more, I suppose..."

HIS GRASP of Anita's hand had become violent. "You're hurting me," she said softly, and pried his fingers loose. They were strong fingers.

"The children?" she ventured.

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"The seventh salvo has fallen on San Diego," grated the loudspeaker. "Our information is that twenty-three additional salvoes are in the air. Our anti-missile activity is to this moment twenty-seven percent effective..."

"They were blond. They lived. But of course I've never seen them since. They've used them for guinea pigs, you know, with their lousy genetic probes, and their cell counters and..."

"How long have you been in the Decontamination Corps, Peter?"

"Almost three years. Cleaning up mankind's dirt."

"Peter, I'm glad I found you in the cafeteria tonight. You looked so lonely, standing in the line."

He leaned forward in a kind of agony. "Today. It doesn't make any difference how he said it, what he meant was breeding us. Making children. Making children who can be janitors. 'Mankind needs you'..."

She put her hand easily to his mouth. "Careful, Peter, you're starting to shout."

His shoulders sagged. "I'd like to see my kids again. I'd like to be a man again. They've used my kids to make a lousy breeder out of me. 'We've found out,'" he mocked MacAfee, "'we've found out that you immunes breed true, that your children will be blond and immune...' For Mankind, he said. Where are my kids, Anita? What are we but garbage men...cleaning up after Mankind? And they want more of us so they can go ahead and keep on making more messes and maybe kill themselves off..."

"YOUR ATTENTION please. The last seven salvoes have been cut off in midflight. All congratulations to our Anti-Missile Corps. The all-clear is due shortly. All Decontamination Corps personnel will report to Colonel MacAfee for assignment immediately after all-clear."

To his television image, they meant. "Here we go," said Peter Sands, standing, the shell of his manhood beginning to fall away from him again.

A movement had started in the direction of the tube-car. Anita held Peter back, and

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where before she had exuded a kind of insistent animal vitality, now for the first time there was something of desperation in her manner. It came to him that she was afraid—not of the outside, but afraid that he would walk away from her.

"There was something I read once, Peter... please, this is important. *'Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.'* This afternoon, at the meeting... for the first time in two years I felt happy."

"Happy?" he gasped. He felt dizzy, ill at the thought.

"Peter, listen to me. *They're destroying themselves.*"

"Let them. I'll dance over their graves. We'll all dance over their..."

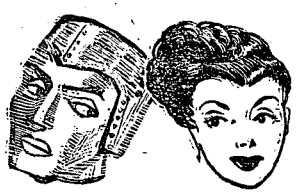
Then he saw the look of exultation on her face, and listened again to the words she had said, and he felt himself consumed by the femaleness of her. The touch of her hand on his as she held him back filled him with a strength that he had never hoped to know again.

"Yes, Peter. And so will our children."

END AS AN EXPLORER ..... *Jim Harmon*
The World Convertor could produce a "wife" for Berk Edmonds, and fellow colonists for him, on this Earthlike planet. But there had to be something that a man could do better.....

TO ERR IS INHUMAN ..... *Marion Zimmer Bradley*
The photos showed that the females on this planet were delightfully mammillian—but they showed something else, too. Something that made the invaders wonder...

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER ..... *Robert Silverberg*
It was a field day for reporters and art-dealers when the being from Paradilla came to select art-treasures for the Emperor. But Earthmen had forgotten something about beauty...



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Readin' and Writhin'

Book Reviews by CALVIN M. KNOX

LOST IN SPACE, by George O. Smith. Avalon, $2.75

This story, which appeared first in *Startling Stories* in 1954, would have made an acceptable enough novelet—but it has been mercilessly padded out to novel length, both for the original magazine publication and for this Avalon edition. The result is on the interminable side.

The situation Smith sets up is simple. Alice Hemingway, the Pure and Virtuous Heroine, is caught in a space-wreck and cast adrift in a lifeship with her employer, elderly millionaire Charles Andrews, and lecherous space pilot Jock Norton. While Alice's fiance, Space Commodore Theodore Wilson, searches manfully for the lost lifeship, an advance-guard of highly superior alien beings enters the scene and debates whether or not to conquer Earth.

And there the situation hangs for 224 pages, the aliens debating, Wilson searching, and Alice defending her virtue against Norton and Andrews. Character development? None that's noticeable. Nor is there any of the plot complexity one can reasonably expect from a novel-length job. Only some

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The World He Left Behind

by Robert Silverberg

Illustrated by EMSH

This was an idyllic world, and the people had been kind and friendly to Jeff Matthews. Corilee had been more than friendly. But why did he get the feeling that they were waiting for him to leave? How could he leave this world behind him?

THEY HAD been very kind to him, here in this other world of warmth and lazy content, but Jeff Matthews was beginning to sense that he had overstayed his welcome. Perhaps the time had come for him to seek the Gateway, if he could find it again, and at last return to the New York of 1963—if indeed the Gateway could restore him to his own world.

Matthews lay sprawled near-

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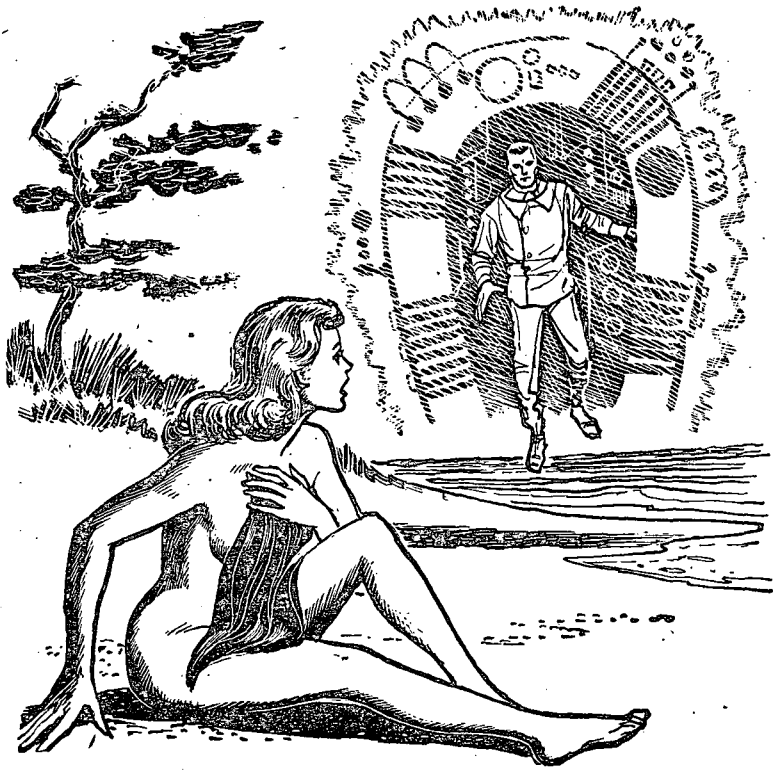

naked on the golden-yellow sands of Murrival Beach, soaking up the warm sunlight. He gave careful thought to the idea that he might be unwanted here. It was a painful thing to admit to oneself, but undeniably it was so. Matthews had no specific instance he could point to; but in his three weeks here he had become sensitive to subtle shades of meaning that once would have passed him by; and he could detect the veiled implications in the words of his new friends.

They seemed to be telling him, *Go back home. You've been here long enough.*

Matthews drowsed on a limb

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of a sandy peninsula that jutted out into the sparkling sea. A cool breeze rippled down out of the northwest, picking up a bit of salt spray and hurling it over him. Matthews grinned and sat up, and there was Corilee standing ten feet away, a grinning imp with arms akimbo.

"You looked so funny when the water hit you!" she said impulsively.

MATTHEWS flicked the sea water from his skin. He was tanning rapidly in the world he still thought of as World X, and he felt healthier than he had ever been in his life. He was twenty-nine, a shade over medium in height and a bit on the spindly side; and in the world on the other focus of the Gateway he had been—the concept was dimming already—an electronics engineer. Here no electronics existed, nor engineers; neither was needed. The giant thermonuclear coil at Darien Bridge provided perpetual power for all the world. The heritage of their past kept these people happy. They were liberated from the toils of routine life, Matthews thought.

He said to the girl, "Where are the others?"

"Coming soon. They've caught some sort of big fish, and we're going to have a splendid feast. Where were you all day?"

Matthews self-consciously kicked up a shimmering tuft of sand with his bare foot. "Alone."

"Oh," the girl said. She smiled, the quiet gleaming smile that served as Matthews' mental tag for Corilee's entire personality, and said no more. No more was necessary. Matthews had invoked the code of privacy; on Murrival Beach, a man spent time alone only when he had to settle some important matter within himself.

The sound of gay singing drifted over the dunes toward them. The others were coming, now—the seven closest friends Matthews had ever had in his life.

HE HAD separated himself from them at dawn, in order to think through this thing in solitude. But the sacrifice of their company had been fruit-

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less; he still had no answer, no way to guide his actions. And now the others were coming, to invite him to join their fun. But how sincere was their invitation, he wondered? If he could read their minds, would he find lurking there a fretful impatience, as if they were merely politely tolerating him until he decided to plunge back through the Gateway to his own mad world?

The thought of that world was like a discordant shriek. He brushed it away and stretched out his arms toward Corilee. "Kiss. Before they come."

She looked at him strangely, and he knew she was wondering why he had added the second sentence. A kiss was a kiss, and what did it matter if the others were there? They knew how to respect privacy.

HE HELD her tight against him for a moment, this girl of a world that was not Earth nor any part of Earth's universe, and felt the warmth of her sun-darkened skin against his own. But there was a stiffness to her response; she was holding back. Matthews felt more deeply troubled than before. Three weeks ago, when he had been fresh and newly-minted into this world, she had held back nothing. But that had been while he was still a stranger here, and therefore welcome.

Overhead hung the lemon-yellow sun that looked like Earth's sun in the blue cloud-flecked sky that could have been Earth's sky on a perfect day. But here the Weather ensured that every day was a perfect day. And this world was not Earth.

The others came over the dune now, Dawl and Glair in the forefront, carrying between them an enormous glassy-eyed green fish. The rest trailed along behind, dancing and skipping through the sand.

Dawl shouted in his booming basso, "We eat well tonight! Look, Jeff—it was a barehand catch!"

"Mirlin and Rodric hypnotized the beast as it swam," Glair added. "Then we plunged in and hauled it out. You should have been there, Matthews!"

"He was alone today," Corilee said.

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THE MERRIMENT stopped. The seven of them stared at him for a long embarrassed moment, as the implications of Corilee's four words registered on them. Matthews wanted to tell them, *"Okay, you've won. I can take a hint. I'll go back where I came from.* That was what they wanted him to say, no doubt.

Instead he said to break the awkward silence, "That's a lovely fish. What's its name?"

"Rainbow fish," Rodric said. At his gesture Dawl and Glair swung the heavy creature over to show Matthews the delicate hues of the spectrum on the underbelly. "See?"

"Lovely," Matthews said again.

"We'll eat well today," Dawl gloated. "Let's build the fire."

Like parts of a single machine, the seven of them fanned out over the beach area to find driftwood for the cooking fire. Though no one had directly asked him, Matthews too began to search for wood, head down and eyes studying the sand. Corilee trailed along behind him.

After a few paces Matthews found a gnarled brown branch protruding from the sand. He wrenched it free and showed it triumphantly to the girl, but she shook her head sadly.

"This is the wrong kind of wood. It does not burn well."

Matthews took the branch from her and savagely jammed it back into the ground, kicking sand over it. His lips were tightly compressed, and he kept his face turned away from her so she would not see his pained expression. At that moment he was closer to hurling himself through the Gateway that hung, gray and opalescent, in the air somewhere along this beach, than he had been in all his stay in World X up to now.

* * *

WORLD X was what they had called it in those New York days so dimly remote, when Matthews had been an electronics engineer, in that other world where such words had meaning. The Gateway had had its own special name, too. Johnny Price, who had been the first to test its strange properties, had dubbed it the Intercontinual Flux-Field

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Disruptor. Its invention had been strictly an accident.

The Air Force research contract that their laboratory held had commissioned them to devise a generator for creating high-gauss magnetic fields. What the Air Force wanted high-gauss magnetic fields for, Matthews did not know—nor care. The reason why was one item of data not usually supplied.

The specifications called for an electronic field generator capable of operating in a field of 10 million gauss; what Matthews and his fellow engineers built was a force-free toroidal magnetic field, in the multi-million-gauss range that had once been only a physicist's pipedream.

At least, they *thought* they had built a magnet. It took them a full year from the day the first sketches went on paper, in the spring of 1962, to the day when the lab technicians tightened the last bolt on the finished model.

ON PAPER, the magnet worked. No one in the lab was quite sure what would happen once current was sent pulsing through it; a magnetic field of such intensity had never been artificially generated before.

Matthews had been one of eleven engineers present at the first tests of the new magnet, even though his part in creating the device had been a small one. He hadn't come up with any of the major suggestions. He was simply another engineer in the lab group, and not the high-powered Edison or Steinmetz he had once pictured himself as growing up to become. He had grown up to become a scientist, at any rate; but either the time for Edisons and Steinmetzes had passed, or else he simply didn't have what it took.

At 29, he was a mediumly successful engineer who got his semi-annual raises when the time came for them, but who invariably was passed over when the laboratory director released the promotions lists. He was just another engineer, uncolorful and unspectacular. He did his job and collected his reasonably adequate salary, and lived by himself in a reasonably adequate three-room apartment not far from the lab-

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oratory's Manhattan home.

Once he had shared the apartment with a gray cat, but the animal had died of natural causes several years back, and the emotional wrench of losing him had kept Matthews from acquiring another pet and facing the possibility of loss again. He had once had a fiancee, too, but for some reason had never quite agreed with her on a number of the allegedly important matters of life. She had drifted out of his ken not long after the death of the cat; and since then, Matthews had grown accustomed to solitude and almost found himself liking it.

HE HAD NO particular reason for staying alive. This fact had never occurred to him until two seconds before the hand of Ludwig, the lab supervisor, closed on the toggle switch that controlled the new magnet. In that moment, Matthews realized that he scarcely cared at all whether or not the device exploded and blew them all to their constituent molecules, as it might very well do. It was curious to discover that he had no fear of death. Matthews did not enjoy making the discovery, because it also showed him that he had no great need of life.

No explosion resulted.

Jimmy Ludwig's wiry hand jerked the switch down; meter needles surged upward in a frenzy of little pulsations, and for an instant the lights in the big bare windowless laboratory room dimmed. Matthews watched with keen interest as a vaguely circular cloud issued from the magnet's core and billowed up until it formed an oval the height of a man, gray in color and flecked with curiously undefinable splashes of other tones.

For a moment no one in the room spoke. Then Jimmy Ludwig's hoarse, puzzled voice was heard. "Damn—what do we have here?"

It was a good question. Magnetic fields, even fields of millions of gauss, are not supposed to be visible. The device had produced a result—but not, it appeared, the *right* result.

AT THAT instant, a chain of events was forced that led Jeff Matthews from his first startled instant of surprise

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to the day when he sent himself plunging through the Gateway. It began when Johnny Price, the short husky engineer standing to Matthews' left, stared at the gray oval that had been formed, dug a burned-out vacuum tube from the wastebasket, and flipped it on a rising curve toward the field.

The tube did not fall to the other side, nor was it consumed in a burst of flame. It simply vanished.

The next few days were days of furious activity for the engineers who worked in Laboratory 9. The whole wing of the building was immediately cordoned off and placed under top classification, while they set about figuring out what it was they had produced.

ON THE THIRD day, someone had the happy idea of constructing a periscope that could be pushed through the field; this came after someone else had stuck a wooden yard-rule through up to the fifteen-inch mark, and had withdrawn it, apparently unharmed. The periscope was duly constructed—a lengthy aluminum tube with the proper arrangement of mirrors—and two gloved technicians, eyeing the gray oval field uneasily, propped the tube up in a sling harness that allowed one end to project some three feet into the field. That way, it would be possible for an observer to peer through the eyepiece without actually coming into physical contact with the tube.

It happened that Jeff Matthews was in the lab standing near the eyepiece when the periscope was installed, and so he was the first to look into the tube—not out of any consuming curiosity, but simply because he was closest and felt *someone* ought to take a look.

He stared for a long minute; when he finally drew his head away, he was pale and puzzled-looking and unsettled. He said in a quiet voice, "Hell, there's a whole *world* in there!"

There was. His single long glimpse had shown him a broad-curving golden beach lapped by foamy blue-green waves. There were people on the beach—not monsters but human beings, happy-looking, tanned men and women wearing the barest minimum of clothes. They were gathered together, pointing to-

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ward the periscope and evidently discussing the situation.

AT FIRST, Matthews thought he was having delusions—but then he called someone else over, and the other also saw the elysian scene. It was no mere South Seas fantasy produced by Matthews' imagination. There *was* a beach on the other side of the strange field. There was a whole world there.

It wasn't long before they were terming it World X, and had constructed half a dozen hypotheses to explain its existence. The one that Matthews liked best suggested that the sudden concentration of intense magnetic force had in some way ruptured the boundaries of the space-time continuum and had opened a Gateway into some parallel world. World X was noplace in the real universe, but off in some cloudy pocket of might-have-been. The idea was an appealing one, and it was adopted as the most reasonable explanation.

The discovery raised certain problems. The Air Force had asked for a supermagnet, not for a parallel world. It was going to prove difficult to explain to the pennywise contract supervisors that the results that had been attained, while interesting, were not precisely the ones that had been ordered.

For that reason a tight security blanket was clamped around the discovery. No word of it was allowed to pass the confines of Laboratory 9. Not until every implication had been explored would any sort of report on the finding be issued.

A HAMSTER, securely strapped to the end of a broad wooden plank, was extended through the field and was drawn back, moments later, apparently without harm. The little beast scampered about with no visible ill effect. Matthews witnessed that demonstration. And, though he didn't know it at the time, he was already well on the road toward resignation from the human race of A.D. 1963.

The idea, at first not even consciously recognized, grew in him during the next two days. The strapped-down hamster had gone through and returned alive; why not a human being?

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There was a world waiting on the other side of the Gateway. And he, Jeff Matthews, was—it was a depressing admission to make—so little bound to the world he inhabited that it wouldn't matter greatly to himself or to anyone else if he vanished permanently through the yawning Gateway.

Naturally he made no attempt to broach the suggestion officially. There were limits to the sort of experimentation a rather conservative laboratory could condone, and his idea definitely passed those limits. Besides, any request that a volunteer be allowed to go through the Gateway would, if it were taken at all seriously, have to ride up the channels to Washington and back—and the answer, when it finally came, would be no. Lives—particularly the lives of trained engineers—are not risked casually for experimental purposes in democratic societies, no matter how willing the volunteer might be.

SO MATTHEWS volunteered more privately. He declared his intention to himself and stayed late at the lab one night. After the others had left, and before the watchman had begun his rounds, Matthews let himself into Laboratory 9, where the gray oval field still hovered in the air as it had ever since the moment, many weeks before, when the field was first switched on. Matthews brought with him a small tape recorder that he had borrowed from another section.

He set the reels going and dictated a brief last statement, explaining that he was going through the Gateway in the interests of science, and politely requesting that the field be left on until he had a chance to return. He intended only a short stay on the other side—a few hours, at most. Just in case he never did come back, he added a word or two about the disposition of his few personal possessions which he wanted sent to a brother living in Louisiana.

When he had said all he cared to say, he switched the recorder off, reeled it back to the beginning, and attached a signed note to it to the effect that some Lab official should play the tape. Then he took a deep breath and a final look around, climbed on a chair, and

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leapfrogged through the Gateway, into what he and the other engineers jokingly called World X.

THERE WAS no sensation of transition. It was a clean, even plunge that brought him down, not on the bare lab floor on the far side of the apparatus, but on soft warm sand. Getting to his feet, he looked back quickly and saw the Gateway still hovering behind him.

A soft deep voice said, "Hello. I'm Glair."

Matthews did not stop to wonder why he understood the other's language. This was a world very much like Earth in many respects; and if it contained human beings, it was reasonable to find oneself understanding their language.

Matthews saw a man who seemed to be in his middle twenties—tall, sun-bronzed, with long flat rippling swimmer's muscles. He wore only a kind of twisted loin-cloth. "I saw you come through the Gateway," the man who called himself Glair went on. "Are you all right, or do you want to be left alone?"

Dizzy, Matthews shook his head slowly from side to side. "No—stay here..."

"Very well. Will you mind if the others come over to have a look at you?"

"Of course not. I mean..."

BUT THE others were coming anyway, big handsome men and women making their way over the shifting dunes to the place on the beach where Matthews had appeared. Superficially they all resembled each other—the other three men cleanly and powerfully built and tanned like Glair, the four women only a trifle smaller, looking like sundarkened sprites. They formed a loose circle around Matthews, curious, responsive, unafraid. He found his own nameless fears of a moment before melting rapidly away.

"I'm Jeff Matthews—I'm from New York City, Earth, the year 1963. Do these things mean anything to you?"

A girl stepped forward, and a smile danced in her golden eyes. "This is Murrival Beach; the year is 761. Did you come through the Gateway?"

"Yes."

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"We've watched the Gateway all day," the girl said. "First this thing came through"—she produced the blackened vacuum tube from a pouch at her hip— "and then a few minutes later that long metal tube, and the funny animal on a stick, and other things—and now you! My name is Corilee," she added irrelevantly.

Matthews nodded. She was a beautiful girl, reminding him in some ways of the girl he had once called his fiancee, reminding him in other ways of the cat he had once loved. Any thought of returning immediately through the Gateway died away. This new world held too much that had to be experienced, first.

CORILEE introduced him to the others: the men, besides Glair, were named Dawl, Mirlin, and Rodric; the other three women—girls, really, or else ageless witches—called themseves Jirain, Torilid, Hastur. Odd names, oddly pronounced, but they clung in his memory. The eight of them formed a sort of group, living together on the beach, fishing and playing and singing. In those first few hours in the other world, it seemed to Matthews that there was little else in life for these people but singing and playing and fishing; later, he would learn of the subtle texture of their emotional relationships, that gave depth and meaning to what otherwise would be idle and parasitic lives.

But that was to come later. Now, they surrounded him, giggling, and stripped away his clumsy 1963-clothes, leaving them strewn on the sand. They half-dragged him down to the edge of the sea. For more than an hour they frolicked wildly in the water; and when that sport palled the man named Rodric produced a loincloth for Matthews similar to the ones the others wore. It was an important symbolic act. In a silent, unspoken, unexpected way, Matthews realized, they had accepted him. The stranger from nowhere had become one of the Group.

HE TRIED to ask questions about the world he had entered, but either his playmates knew surprisingly little or else

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they were concealing things from him. They told him that the year was 761, but no one seemed to know or care what event the numbering stemmed from. No mention was made of any part of the world but Murrival Beach, which apparently extended for hundreds of miles. It was as if the Beach were the entire world—or, at least, the only part of the world that mattered to the Group.

The Group lived in a rambling, strangely-designed mushroom-shaped house several miles from the sea, and Rodric told him once that all the power that was needed to run the house came from a self-replenishing power coil located at a place called Darien Bridge—a coil which, Matthews learned by skillful questioning, provided thermonuclear power. It had been built "long ago," when the world had been much different. But these people went close-mouthed when Matthews tried to elicit points of history; and before long, he realized that they simply did not know. Life for them began and ended on Murrival Beach in the year 761. He stopped asking questions about other places and times.

AND AS HE entered further into the life of the Group, during the next few weeks, he began to see why their thoughts were anchored so firmly in the present. The past, now deep in shadow, had been a time of troubles as well as of scientific development; the future, pegged on the achievements of the past, was changeless and serene, so why worry about it? All that remained was the present, eternally golden.

Matthews swam and fished and sang. His city-astrophied muscles swelled and hardened. His soot-clogged lungs revelled in the winelike air. His skin blistered at first, reddened, then began to bronze.

Corilee came to him as a lover. Not exclusively, of course—an exclusive monopolization of any person's emotions would be unthinkable in such a society—but he felt an emotional bond with her deeper than with any of the other members of the Group.

In the second week they migrated, leaving their home

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on the beach and heading southward a distance of some twenty miles, where a new home waited unoccupied for them. Matthews realized vaguely that in migrating he was leaving the Gateway somewhere behind him, but that mattered very little to him. When the time came for him to go back to his own world, he would probably be able to find it again. And if he failed—well, no loss. He was a member of the Group. New York, the lab, the real world, all such things were faded memories beside the warm and undeniable reality of Corilee and the Group. His perceptions heightened; his mind was keen, his eyes clear and sharp. He realized that for twenty-nine years he had been only half alive.

Gradually he resolved never to go back. He would remain here on the Beach forever.

And simultaneously it became clear to him that staying here forever was impossible. The Group did not really want him, not even Corilee. Small things told him that—a guarded half-rebuke, a hooded chill. They were being polite to him. The code evidently dictated that strangers were to be accepted into the Group.

But they were waiting patiently for him to go home.

* * *

THE NIGHT they feasted on the rainbow-fish, Matthews decided to have it out with them. They sat, the eight of them and him, round a smouldering fire that Mirlin and Jirain had built from the wood gathered by the others. The bony remnants of the great fish swung from the spit, and the smell of the succulent white meat still lingered in the air. Dawl was strumming a musical instrument of some kind—a contorted elbow-bent thing that was a sort of a guitar—and he was singing a wordless harmonic melody to go with it. Matthews nestled next to Corilee, but tonight he took no comfort from her nearness.

In the silence that followed Dawl's improvisation, Matthews said, "I would like to speak."

EIGHT HEADS inclined interestedly toward him. Matthews felt his stomach churn-

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ing. These people were so polite, so good; and yet what he had to say amounted virtually to an accusation of rudeness veiled by outward civility. He hardly knew how to begin.

The silence grew and became almost embarrassing. At last Matthews burst out with: "You've all been very good to me. A stranger, from another place, with different ways—and you've taken me right into your midst."

"We believe in kindness to strangers," Rodric said agreeably. "When you appeared, what else could we have done but offer you friendship?"

"But you haven't, really." Matthews sensed uneasiness in the group. "You've let me join the Group, sure, and you treat me as an equal. But—I'm going to speak bluntly now—I've gotten to feel that you're all marking time with me. Waiting for me to go back where I came from. You'll all too damned polite to come out and say it, but you're hinting at it. You don't want me here!"

"We are very fond of you," Glair said.

"We all love you deeply," Torilid said in a soft tone.

"But you all want me to go home. Why don't you say it? Say that you don't want me around?"

AS HE SPOKE, Matthews realized that if he were wrong, if the symptoms he thought he detected had all been imaginary, then he had just destroyed his place in the Group anyway. He had externalized an unpleasant emotion—and, in this placid society, one refrained from making disturbing outbursts such as the one he was indulging in now.

But it was too late to take back the words. He could only forge ahead.

He stared at eight dark unhappy faces and said, "I liked it here. But I won't impose myself on you. I'll take the hint and go back through the Gateway. I'll leave tonight—the Gateway is north of here, isn't it?"

Quietly Dawl said, "You misunderstand, Jeff. Our friendship for you is real. But there is danger for us in letting you stay here."

Hastur took up the explana-

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tion. "Others might come through the Gateway in search of you—others we might not like as well as you. Or perhaps we would find ourselves exposed to regular visitations—tourists, or even an army of conquest."

"So you see," Mirlin went on, "we've been quietly hoping that you would go back of your own free will, as a kind of sacrifice for the good of the Group, and—*and close the Gateway so no others can come through!*"

A lump formed in Matthews' throat as he realized what an egocentric idiot he had been. The subtle ostracism had existed, all right, but it had not been aimed at him personally; they sincerely liked him, even wanted him as a member of the Group. But so long as the Gateway remained open, the entire Beach way of life was in danger. By returning to his own world and shutting off the field, he could repay them for the three weeks of happiness they had given him.

His voice was husky as he said, "Now I understand. I'm—I'm sorry. I didn't realize that—that..." He moistened his lips. "I'll start north tonight. Back to the Gateway."

THE EIGHT of them insisted on accompanying him on the northward journey, despite his protests. It took them four days and four nights to make the short trip, and on the fifth morning Matthews found himself once again facing the vague purplish hole in the air through which he had made his entrance to Murrival Beach.

They embraced him, one at a time, Glair first and Corilee last. Corilee's embrace was warmer than the rest, and longer-lasting, and it seemed to be as painful for her to let go as it was for him. But her eyes were dry as she smiled goodbye to him. He looked at them all, Dawl and Glair and Mirlin and Rodric, Jirain and Torilid and Hastur and especially Corilee. Then he turned to face the Gateway.

It hung a foot above the surface of the sand. Matthews did not want to linger. He took a last single breath of sea-salted air and hopped through.

He expected to find himself returned to the lab, or perhaps simply dissolved and scattered

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into the void. The one eventuality he was not prepared for was emerging on Murrival Beach.

HE HAD definitely stayed on the Beach. He had hopped forward some three feet on the sand. Otherwise he did not appear to have traveled. Irrational joy welled up in him. He turned to offer his apologies, to say to them, *Sorry, I tried, but I guess I stay here after all!*

He was alone.

The wind blew gusts of sand over the surface of the beach, and white seabirds wheeled and shrieked overhead. The Group had vanished. And so had the Gateway.

Matthews remained quite still for one numb moment, then knelt and picked up a handful of the warm sand and scattered it in perplexity. The weather now seemed a trifle cooler, and it was undoubtedly later in the day than it had been before his leap. The sun was lower in the sky, and he could clearly see the rising moon against the backdrop of darkening blue. He had begun his leap in mid-morning and now it was late afternoon.

Someone was coming toward him from below, from the edge of the sea. Matthews narrowed his eyes and saw that it was Glair. Glair was dressed now not in a purple loincloth but a red one. Matthews trotted forward to meet him.

He said, "It didn't work. I'm still here. Where did everyone go?"

GLAIR'S normal amiability seemed shaken for a moment. He frowned, then managed his old smile and said, "Hello. I'm afraid I don't know you."

"Don't know me? Glair, is this a joke?"

"You know my name!"

"Of course I know your name! I'm Jeff—have you forgotten me?"

"Jeff?" Glair pronounced the word as if it were utterly alien to him.

"Of course," Matthews persisted. "I went through the Gateway, but nothing seemed to happen. I'm still here on Murrival Beach in the year 761."

The smile slowly left Glair's

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face. He ran his tongue speculatively round the edges of his lips and finally said, "You are mistaken. This year is 758."

"But..."

Matthews stopped. A rush of ideas burst upward through his brain. This explained why Glair didn't know him. But how could he have stepped through the Gateway and remained in World X, three years earlier, instead of returning to his own world and time? And why had the Gateway vanished?

He recalled words Corilee had spoken: *We've watched the Gateway all day. First this thing came through, and then a few minutes later that long metal tube, and the funny animal on a stick, and other things—and now you!*

HE HADN'T paid close attention to her words. She had said the Group had watched these things happen all in the same day, within a span of hours. But, thought Matthews with growing wonder, it had been more than six weeks between the time Johnny Price had flipped the vacuum tube through the Gateway and the day Matthews himself had taken the plunge. Six weeks—in a few hours!

"You look troubled," Glair said. "Do you want to be alone."

Matthews nodded. "I—I have to work out a few things for myself."

He shut his eyes for a moment and tried to reason it out. The hamster had entered the Gateway and come back alive, but the hamster had been gone no more than two or three seconds. Not enough to produce any visible time-distorting effect. Perhaps an hour had passed for that hamster in those seconds, but how were they to know?

Matthews wrestled with the concept. Suppose, he asked himself, suppose World X really is a parallel world? Just like Earth in every respect, except that its time flows faster. What was 1963 in my world was perhaps 2500 in World X when I crossed through the Gateway. Only now the Gateway has swept along at the faster World X rate, and so I've returned to my own world at roughly the place along its time-stream that World X had reached when my world was at the 1963 point...

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HIS HEAD began to ache. He saw that he had made a zigzag round trip from 1963 to A.D. 2500 or so of the parallel world, and back again, this time to A.D. 2500 or so of his own world. The twin worlds were identical in all respects. A Group here, a Group there; Glair here, Glair there. He had made the circuit across the gap and back, and now the Gateway was gone. In this world, it had long since been shut off.

In World X, now irretrievable on the other side of the time-flow, the year 761 was long gone, the strange visitor long forgotten. But here the time had not yet come. He was new here. Perhaps his explanation was all wrong. It did not matter. Only one thing mattered. He was back in his own world but not in his own time, and he was in the time of Murrival Beach, somewhere in his own future.

HE JOGGED over to where Glair stood and said, "I think I owe you an apology. I assumed you knew me. But you really don't. Not yet, anyway."

"I'm afraid I don't follow you," Glair replied.

"Of course you don't. But I'll explain everything. I promise." Matthews took a deep breath of the tangy, exhilarating air. The Gateway no longer existed as a threat to the Beach people; he could win their friendship a second time, and this time they wouldn't ask him subtly to leave.

"The others in the Group," he said. "Where are they?"

"At the edge of the sea. Some of them are swimming."

"And is Corilee there?"

Glair looked more puzzled than ever. "Yes."

"And Dawl, and Mirlin, and Rodric? Jirain, Torilid, Hastur?"

"You know all our names. I wish..."

"I'll explain later," Matthews promised. He grinned cheerfully at Glair. He had returned to the world he left behind him, and it had become the world he wanted. He started to sprint over the dunes down to the sea, to the place where the Group swam. To Corilee. She did not know him yet, but now there was plenty of time for them to get acquainted all over again.

★

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Complete Novelet

The Glorious Gestalt

by Robert Emmet Langan

Like all other men, Brannich had been freed from labor by automation. And like the others, he had to join a team — dedicated to carrying on meaningless rituals, in order to keep humans doing SOMETHING! But Brannich found this intolerable — and his attempts to do something MEANINGFUL led to a fantastic trial...

PREPARED—no, resolved—to eat his humble pie and like it, Brannich paused for leave-taking: to say goodbye to the self he had been. *"I am other I now,"* roared up out of Saint Augustine, *"where is the I who was?"* His strong, calloused hand closed on, but did not twist, the brilliant, stainless brass doorknob. This too, he warned himself; don't think of it.

The hallway stereophones,

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properly below the threshhold of his hearing as he moved, now came in loud and clear. Too loud and clear.

THE REACH OF FAUSTIAN MAN IS UPWARD AND TO THE INFINITE... WORK IS DIRECTED PLAY ...and so said Dewey, too.

THE MYTHOS CONTAINS WITHIN ITSELF THE SEEDS OF ITS OWN CONSTRUCTION ... Spengler.

Bowdlerized...*or is he allowed to sneak in here?* Brannich's thought asked, as simultaneously he jerked his head in self anger. Stuff like that had brought him to the moment and the place he stood. *This here and this now.* About to face the other members sitting in Team Court and Trial against him. With their knowing in advance —as he did—what their verdict had to be.

I am other I now, where is the I who was? Bad to think, bad to dwell upon. Same thing with the doorknob. And Automation.

Teamplay demanded that he know both process *and* history of the technics. Heresy, though—out-and-out Guilt of Foul—for him to grin at the human motives that had produced this forever gleaming, fingerprint-proof metal. A soldier that tired of Blitz cloth, and a burglar whose lost glove earned him a stretch in the pokey.

And yet: everything, everybody, waiting for him on the other side of the door waited because of that same quoted imponderable—where *are* the snows of yesteryear?—or because of the stainless gleaming brass. And Automation.

The Spanking Machine included.

BRANNICH opened the door, blanked the hallway stereophones with their subliminal conditioning and messages garbled out of John Dewey and Oswald Spengler: *Work is directed play...the reach of Faustian Man—Upward, To The Infinite!* Well, he hoped for that, anyhow.

Brannich stepped inside, let the door swing shut behind him. The door with its tri-dim symbol flashing for a clear instant in the corner of his vi-

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sion: a left-handed quarterback who operated in the hodge-podge of a Split T formation. Brannich's own office door carried on it a scrawny, staggering, double-bucketed waterboy.

Lo! The mountain has labored and brought forth a mouse! For mountain, read Automation, and for its mouse-like get, witness the culture and society of the Teams. Lloyd Brannich's attempt to shrug it away inwardly, to lave his feelings, did not come off. He did, however, dredge up an old maxim: if you want to get something done, you make do with what you have.

"Hello, everybody."

SET FACES and flat stares rebuked Brannich for his breach of formality: for they sat in complete and formal assembly. Seven Members of the Team were lined panel-style at a long desk. They faced the eighth and final Member. He sat on a folding, canvas chair, and he wore a baseball cap.

Off to one side stood a weird mix-up that looked as if somebody had put a spaceship's control panel in the third degree room of a brutal cop force. The whole crazy maze centered around an Iron-Mary-like thing combining the worst features of an electric chair and a dentist's engine: the Spanking Machine. Called the Psychological Re-integrator by proper society —the Members of the Team. Called Torchie by Brannich and the rest of the boys in the backroom.

Torchie, after Torquemada, that old Spaniard of the Middle Ages, the Grand Inquisitor, whose job it was to smoke out heretics and make good Christians of them once again. The electronic replacement for Poppa's hairbrush and the psychiatrist's couch.

PSYCHOLOGICAL re-integration. Theory: tear the personality apart piece by piece. Exhibit all the tangled skeins and threads and bits and chunks to the absolutely objectified observer from whom you have torn that personality, that identity... Show him where he's done wrong. Punish him for it. Hurt him. Then re-integrate. Put him back together

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again. He'll be a changed man. He'll get with the Team. With It and For It! So, at least, the Team Members were conditioned to believe, and did. Except, maybe, for Maude Akers, seated there in Center Position at the long table.

Brannich spoke directly at her in a bland, formal tone. "I beg your pardon. Members of the Team: Brannich, Lloyd, reports for skull practice as ordered."

"Come off it, Lloyd! This is not skull practice, and you know it."

The oddly-toned reproach puzzled Brannich. Mellow humor had combined almost exactly with sharp c e n s u r e. Knowing Maude Akers, and just a little fearful of her right now, he waited.

"Did you set that up?"

Brannich knew that she meant Torchie, knew also she would correctly read his wag of the head, but for the others he pretended to misunderstand.

"The Coach wears his Badge of Office," Brannich indicated the eighth Member's baseball cap. "He sits at counterpoint to the other Members. It certainly *seems* to be Skull Practice."

"He also carries the Wand of the Patriarch, Engineer-Constructor Brannich." Maude's night-dark eyes, closely set to a thin, high nose—so suggestive in profile of a bent forefinger—twinkled at Brannich in mocking laughter. "You can see that we're all in full regalia. You also know perfectly well why—you're here. Even if you do deny setting that thing up."

ONCE MORE B r a n n i c h evaded her reference to the Spanking Machine. "Where's your badge, Maude?" he asked.

"Ex Officio Member Brannich is reprimanded," came her firm, quick reply, "for unseemly familiarity." She paused to hold her knitting above the level of the Team Table, so Brannich could see it, then went on: "Reprimanded for addressing the Matriarch by her first name, without title."

"Okay, M a u d e. Sorry." Brannich smiled at her, asked in a tone to go with the smile: "Those socks for me?"

A weird s o u n d—like a scream from a croupy seagull,

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that peculiar throat-clearing and attention-getter of the longhair intellectual, came from the Left End Member.

"I would submit that there can be little doubt about the possible effectuality of Re-integration for an individual who so callously and so patently recommits an offense for which he has just been censured. Kkeeeuuhhr!"

"Aw, shut up, Little Lord Fauntleroy!" Anger and contempt blasted so intensely, so flashingly, in Brannich that his throat locked. *Poor John Dewey,* he thought. *And poor, poor Spengler. How they must roll in their graves to know what's been made of their work.* "Who punched your button anyhow?"

"BRANNICH!" The Coach Patriarch snapped to his feet so violently that his folding canvas chair fell over backwards. "Turn in your suit!"

CLAMOR. Cries of "Re-integration, Re-integration!" The various Members shouted, murmured, nodded to each other. The Member at Left Tackle position assumed his professional mien as Societal Therapist, pulled at his left ear-lobe, nodding: "P-R is definitely indicated."

Matriarch Maude, the only calm one there, rapped with her knitting needles for attention. "Be quiet, all of you! I still have the floor."

They got quiet, instantly. All of them. Not only because Maude Akers held the ritualisitic seat of Matriarch—the fabled mother and mother of fables—but because, aside from Brannich himself, she was the only one in that room with any claim at all to real knowledge of any kind whatsoever.

The rest were mere dilletantes—no, not even mere, just phony ones. Phony phonies. They knew it about themselves. They accepted it. They had to; Automation made them. In a monarchy, you do not rear and educate every citizen to become king. In an automationed society, you do not teach anyone—except for a few kings and queens like Brannich and Maude Akers—to *do* anything.

Anything real, that is.

You just can't take the chance, however infinitesimal, that he might—or might not—

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do: move, make, build, bulge, tear down, *or change something*. Let him do that and he's liable as all hell to knock care-free, want-free society—Super-Society—right off its miles-high unicycle of O-so-delicately-balanced economy.

Automation: Stale-Mate-ion. Or maybe best of all decimation: the cutting down of a mass to a tenth of its original size. Yes: Decimation-Automation. Put in your original push-button system and cut out nine tenths of your laboring serfs—just like that. Sure. And, Just Like That: free 80,000,000 serfs; create 80,000,000 human beings.

As John Dewey said: "The ultimate goal of production is the production of human beings..." Only...what are you going to do with all those people? Where are you going to *put* 80,000,000 of them? *Eighty million.*

Automation. Stale-Mate-ion. Decimation. And how long to reduce your one tenth with the nine tenths gone, to a tenth of the tenth, and that tenth to a tenth in its turn. *A time times and half a time.*

WITH HER knitting needles, Matriarch Maude Akers rapped one sharp final time. "Pay attention to me, all of you. And that means you, too, Lloyd Brannich!" She looked now the eagle she was. "We're here on a serious matter." One by one she looked each of them over, ended up by meeting Brannich squarely eye to eye. "Just how serious, *none* of you realize."

Brannich tensed in spite of himself—the reach of Faustian Man is Upward and to the Infinite—as a panic thought spiralled through him: *How much has she guessed? Or worse, still, figured?* For that's how it would be with Maude Akers: not guesswork but extrapolation.

"If the Matriarch please..." Brannich deliberately, and majestically prefaced his words with the ultra-formal third person. He had to stall out enough time to size things up and get going with his plan again. He put on a mask of offended dignity, but Maude Akers wasn't having any of that.

"The Matriarch does not please. You've got something

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up your sleeve, and I'm going to dig it out! Whatever it is."

With those words Maude Akers struck to nullify Brannich's gambit. A good move; but it allowed him a counter.

"Madam!"

Brannich's poise and formality, though still feigned, now carried with them the weight of an accused and interrupted person. "I had not finished speaking." He scored.

MAUDE AKERS' posture underwent that tiny backdrawing which means an opponent has made a telling point. Some of the stern sureness went out of her expression. She, too, as Brannich was doing, turned to study the other Members of the Team.

Work IS directed play.

Probably right at the moment there were hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of eight Member panels in meeting all around the world. Sitting in rooms like this, supposedly to decide the great issues and set the policies of humankind. But all the others would be for mere Skull Practice. Dillentantism. Their Matriarchs would not be Maude Akers. Their Ex Officio Engineer-Constructor Member would be invited but not attending.

As each bee-hive has but one Queen, so each Megapolis of Automation has but one Maude Akers and a few score mechanic-technicians going by the grandiose name of Engineer-Constructors. Add another Queen Bee, and you split your hive. Let too many bee-keepers fool around and the bees stop producing honey.

That miles-high unicycle of O-so-delicately balanced economy.

Brannich repressed a grin. Through his mind flashed the tri-dim symbol on his own office door: the scrawny, double-bucketed, staggering waterboy. He sometimes suspected that Maude Akers knew the true significance of that symbol... and of his plan to change it. But surely none of the rest could know—not the mouse-life anyhow; not the labor-done get of Automation.

Waterboys, who worked harder than any player on any field of sport, and who were far more dedicated...even to aber-

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ration, could never hope to win a school letter. They weren't eligible.

Lloyd Brannich, Master Engineer-Constructor, with his hard-calloused, workingman's hands, could not vote. He could not propose, nor submit, nor integrate. He could not influence Team Action in any way.

The Members of the Team, phony dilletantes, without one bit of real knowledge among them, could vote.

Brannich aimed to get the vote.

II

STILL WEARING his mask of injured dignity, he approached the long desk and stood before Maude Akers. As good a way as any, he figured, to hide his queasy feeling that she knew exactly just what Oswald Spengler meant to him.

TO THE UPWARD AND THE INFINITE!

Peripheral vision allowed him a dim take-in of the Members of the Team, while he glared steadily at Maude Akers.

But he feared, too, that she knew all about his aim, his plan, and the ultimate goal he hoped to reach with them. *Ad astra per aspera...*

"Well, Lloyd? Have you finished speaking now?"

As the pretense for Brannich, so the mellow and kindly mirth for Maude Akers. She smiled as she spoke, and her eyes took on the sheen of outgiving seen as a rule only in the eyes of very small children and very gentle dogs. She scored graciously, did Maude Akers: as befitted her title of Matriarch, and her real job of politician.

For that's what Maude Akers was, a politician in the way Aristotle himself defined it: Politics, the Science of the Sciences, the ruling and government of the *Polis,* which must—to be good and complete—incorporate and apply all the other sciences...for are they not also pursuits of men?

A flash survey of the Team showed Brannich that Maude had stripped advantage from him. They all waited, eagerly, one and each to see what he would do next. To see, judging

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by their expressions, to see how he'd put his foot in the bucket again..

"Let's get it over with."

BRANNICH spoke in a flat monotone. Maude Akers had forced his action. He hoped, though, that she had not been prepared for him to act so directly, leaping beyond the parry-and-thrust tactics of wordplay, of jockeying for position.

Brannich scored with more success than he had expected. Maude Akers' stoppage of breath showed plain. She held herself rigid for an instant, then ever so slightly slumped forward.

"Please, Lloyd!" Almost involuntarily, it seemed, her hand lifted toward him, dropped. "I know what you want, but remember: not even you realize just how vital this meeting is!"

Brannich had to press, to plunge on, to keep his gain. He hoped Maude would understand there was nothing personal in it; but even if not, he had to go on for the sake of his goal. But, still...

Please? Maude begging him? As if she did know all, and intended to side with him? But she couldn't. *She simply could not know everything.* Maude Akers though she be, and Matriarch to boot, she did not belong out in the backroom as an Engineer-Constructor. And as Brannich hoped it, even the rest of the boys out back did not guess all his secrets.

BRANNICH took in the whole board. The Team. The seven Members seated at the long, solid, yellow-oak table. *Seven. They can't get away from their sevens.* No. Wrong. Humble Pie.

A line came to him out of Aldous Huxley's *'Eyeless in Gaza':* "The only real teamwork is accomplished by rowing eights and football elevens..." Then followed remembrance of an attitude, a philosophical posture, taken as *the thing;* engendered by the editor-publisher of a string of Confession rags: "Backfield men are not to be trusted, they are out for what they can get; linemen, especially tackles and guards, are cleancut American boys."

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Add the words of the Ol' Stubber: "If you wanta grandstand, if you wanta be a star in your own right, go out for golf, or tennis, or wait for the Olympics, but get offa my gridiron!"

And where is there room for Spengler then, with his Present as a Becoming, and not the stasis of a dead Become? This moment, this now, this breath I take leads to the next. Out of the become, proceeds the becoming.

I am other I now, where is the I who was?

Sure, and where ARE the snows of yesteryear?

THE LONG desk with its seven Members seated panel-style represented the Team Line Up. Maude Akers, at Center, was Matriarch. Beside her, at Right Guard, a fat, frowsy frump—half again Maude's age and twice her weight—stood for the Little Sister. She wore a Juliet cap, flared Princess skirt, ballet slippers, and carried Maypole ribbons. Her field, the Dance.

At Right Tackle, by rules of Team Line Up, sat a girl in her teens, the Big Sister—her field, Philosophy and Science. She did not wear her Badges of Office, as did the Dancer, but sported them behind her: roll-down charts of Phrenology and Palmistry, mounted on collapsable stands.

At right End sat the superfine—or female—Kissing Cousin. Bone-thin, she had a mouth that looked like a sunburst in reverse, as if it were an implosion, a compass rose with a tiny gash for its center instead of a radiant point. The Drama, her field, and her Badges two: the bloodhounds who sat beside her, and the blackface rag doll she carried...taken, of course, from the master work of all time: *"Uncle Tom's Cabin"*.

To the Left of Center, the male Members sat.

Brannich had once asked Maude Akers if that meant to imply they were all aberrant, as had been catalogued that one time Man in the White House who immortalized the phrase: 'slightly left of center...' "Go tighten your nuts and bolts, Mechanic," she had answered, "and leave politics to me."

On Maude's left, at Guard Position, the Little Brother;

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his field of Music marked by the Badge of reed Pan Pipes, and goat's tail, now concealed by derriere in seated posture.

BIG BROTHER sat at Left Tackle, and he made much of his formal title of Societal Therapist. Brannich always suspected that he had made it up himself, but Maude Akers said that kind of thing showed initiative, and should be encouraged anyhow.

No chance for a Societal Therapist to upset the apple cart balanced on the miles-high unicycle. He couldn't get near the machinery, so he couldn't drop a monkey wrench into it. His Badges, as might be expected of a Societal Therapist—that is, Shaman, Witch Doctor, and Medicine Man—were profuse. A Devil Mask, a Zodiacal chart, maracca gourds, boa feather anklets, and...Brannich could never get this, and Maude wouldn't even look at them: greaves.

And at Left End: the Poet, Little Lord Fauntleroy himself, in Eton collar, Byronic wig, and Ascot tie. His 'family relationship', male Kissing Cousin.

The Basic Team is the Family Team! Write it in letters of gold, cast those letters to the sky, and let the welkin ring.

It worked. The unicycle stayed upright. The machinery kept on running. People had something to do...all those millions and millions of new human beings produced when Automation freed the slaves.

In the meantime, Brannich's reverie went on, your own kind and you had developed...well, you'd developed—at least, you had *helped* to develop... George.

George—Torchie's Big Brother, or Poppa, or Master Control Unit, whatever you wanted to call it. Developed to the point where you yourself could be automationed out; if you wanted to give up the sheer fun of doing real and actual work. *With your hands.* The fun of controlling, of being master to a beautiful, beautiful piece of equipment. And that's how you put it to yourself. A piece of equipment.

Your ego, your *manhood,* could exult in the magnificence of this creation, this piling on Ossa on Olympus and then on

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Pelion, but damned if your machine would ever be anything more than a super tool to you. Even if you had just about made him sentient.

him . . . !

Let George do it. . . !

Damn it! A machine is an *it,* not a him nor a he. . . nor even a *she,* granted that in the days of wooden ships and iron men, sailors endowed their vessels with feminine being.

"COME OUT of it, Lloyd. You're no sheepherder."

"Huh?"

Maude Akers' voice pulled Brannich out of his reverie, but he could get no sense from her words, even though he dove back into the mnemonic chamber of his mind where they echoed around in a nagging and unbalancing way.

"It used to be called woolgathering, Lloyd. Reminiscing in a deep brown study."

"O," Brannich said. "I see." He didn't; he was still in the dark, feeling again that half-thrill of panic.

Danger to his plan, he sensed. Maude had accused him of having something up his sleeve. Brannich felt convinced she had something up hers. But what? And how could she know what he had in mind to do?

He caught Maude in profile as she glanced to her left in mild annoyance at Little Sister, who—With It and For It!—forever played her part: by waving her Maypole ribbons in rhythm with her constant thin humming. *Maude the Eagle,* Brannich felt, *Maude of the all-seeing eye.* In truth, she and the great bird did share the same stark, ugly yet beautiful, nobility. Which still boded no good for Lloyd Brannich's plan.

ONCE, *and once only,* Brannich had asked Maude Akers to explain the Teams and their *raison d'etre.* By the fifth solid hour, when Maude had progressed into psycho-emotionalism, after an intensive course in physiology and anatomy, and was showing him by analogue computation—using synergy, sinaesthesia, and the syncope—that the basic emotions were strongly reflected in Pythagoreanism and the belief in Mystic Numbers . . . well,

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Brannich decided to let George, the Master Control Unit, do his analogue computing for him, and to keep his childhood explanations.

For he couldn't really tell whether or not Maude had confirmed his sneaking hunch about the Teams: that the only real reason for their being was simply to dig out and select potential successors for themselves: the Matriarch Politician and the Master Engineer-Constructor.

Too busy with his own work, and barred anyhow from all areas where it might go on—even if he wanted to investigate—Brannich could only surmise that somewhere a few selected latter-day Vestals were in isolation and training far removed from anything they'd get as full-fledged Members of the Team. Poor kids who would have no idea for years and years to come that actually the heavens had opened to rain down blessings upon them.

How terrible had been Brannich's own chagrin when he had failed to win promotion to Big Brother...when he had been banished into the awful menialism of the backroom, where he must 'earn a living', where he would be taught to *work with his hands!* To stay and stay and stay there, when first one, then another, a third, and more and more of his co-culprits somehow won return from exile for themselves and happily went back to join Proper Society as Members of the Team.

Not Brannich, though. He was always tinkering around at the wrong time, or at the wrong thing, so they told him. He just couldn't make himself care about the WHY? of things, but ZOW! was he busy investigating the WHAT and the HOW of them.

So he stayed in the backroom.

"STOP YOUR dawdling, Lloyd. I've granted you the floor. I've asked you several questions; you've answered none. Answer!"

"Dawdling?" Brannich repeated the word as if he didn't believe it existed. "Questions?" in the same tone. Then, as if the lights had been turned on: "You want an answer to something: a *technical* answer?"

Maude Akers gave him, as

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the expression once went, a Roland for his Oliver—which she'd know, and he wouldn't.

"Yes, Engineer-Constructor Brannich: a technical answer to a technical question. Who set up Torchie? Did you?"

"No."

Came an interruption, from Little Sister, bless—thought Brannich—her waving Maypole ribbons: "Momma Maude, wha's a d'Orchie? Is't ennythin' wike a River d'Erchie?" She stretched out a ballet slippered foot, squirmed her shoulders.

"Members of the Team!"

Brannich spoke loudly to get their attention. Except for the female Kissing Cousin—engrossed in petting her bloodhounds—they all attended the Matriarch's explanation to Little Sister about Torchie (d'Orchie) and the River d'Erchie. *A rivederci, dear, a rivederci, indeed...and Auf Wiedersehn to you, Maude.*

"Yes, Lloyd?" Maude spoke with a questioning air of expectancy.

"I THINK we'd better get on with this. Enough time has gone by. I know why I'm here: Team Court and Trial; charge, Guilt of Foul. But I'm entitled to know—and I want to know—the specific instances, acts, or events. Tell me. Then I'll take my medicine like a good little boy, and go into the Spanking Machine. Your pardon: the Psychological Reintegrator." Couldn't give Little Sister another opening.

"Good play, Brannich!" The Coach Patriarch jumped up and yelled out his approval. "I almost wish you didn't have to turn in your suit, boy. You're With It now! With the Team!"

Indeed I am, Coach, and right according to plan and schedule.

III

IN ESSENCE, Brannich's plan was simple enough. Carrying it out against Maude presented the difficulty.

Reorganize the Teams into baseball nines. "The American Way is the Sportsman's Way, and the True American Game is Baseball..." The battery to be: himself as pitcher and Maude Akers as catcher. Re-

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sult: the vote for Brannich, and full, absolute power of initiative and control. No pitcher, no game.

Method of accomplishment: accept the verdict of Psychological Re-integration, and go into Torchie for a session of Spanking. At least make the Team Members believe that to be happening. Actually just sit in the chair while the boys out in the backroom sent the machine through its motions.

After the "treatment", come out. Tell the Members that you've made a tremendous discovery, possible because of the magnificent i n s i g h t newly gained by your re-conditioning.

They'll go for it, they'll believe it, such is their faith in the majesty of Automation and Psychological Re-integration. Tell them they, too, must go into Torchie for a spell.

"A question arises out of this," mused the Societal Therapist. "Is Brannich once more Guilty of Foul for prompting action before the Matriarch and? or? Coach? Or is he, as mere Ex Officio Member, outside the rules for Skull Practice?"

"But, Svengali," —the Societal Therapist also dabbled in hypnotism, hence the name— "Momma Maude has said and said 'tisn't Skull Pwactice." Little Sister at Right Guard, really With It and For It! Giving her all to her part as she hummed and waved her Maypole ribbons; while Brannich still thoughtfully reviewed his plan.

SEND THE Members in, one at a time.

Have your set-up all ready out in the backroom. Give the boys back there, out there, the word, and let them pour on the 'treatment'. You'll get the result you want, even though the treatment you give is anything but Re-integration. Use Torchie as an extremely accelerated conditioner; in a word, as a mechanical hypnotist.

Pavlov got his dogs to salivate every time he rang the dinner bell. It took time. But, with fly-agaric and mescal derivatives to heighten the time sense—with hypnopaedics and subliminal attack of the senses —you can jam in your conditioned response as quickly as you so desire.

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Just one fly in the ointment: Maude Akers. She had too much; she was just too sharp to go for the put-up job Brannich and the boys in the backroom had arranged. She'd catch on. She had too complex a personality, and worlds too much knowledge, for them to know how to fool her as they would fool the Members of the Team.

The plan to win Maude: tell the simple truth and appeal to her reason. Her knowledge, her job. Her self. Which had seemed great to Brannich when he devised it. Now, it looked not so good.

He decided.

...well, anyway, stick with it...make do somehow with what you've got. You don't know for sure that it won't work.

"Uncle Lloyd," this was Big Sister, at Right Tackle. "Could I see your palm a minute?" She paused, placed a slender finger to her fair young cheek. "Or maybe I ought to give you a head reading."

Maybe you'd better look at your own palm, Angel, thought Brannich, while he raised an eyebrow at Little Brother, who had begun to play the kootch-dance tune on his reed Pan Pipes.

THEN, AT last, Brannich met Maude Akers' gaze. There, he met an intense air of concern, as if Maude watched somebody she loved performing on a high-wire in the circus. Oddly combined with that: a kind of censure for him, Lloyd Brannich.

"Lloyd, I know what you want. I've seen you when you watch the stars. I feel sympathy for what you feel when you look up at them. But believe me, you haven't thought this thing through. I ask you one more time: *who set up Torchie?"*

"George did. He always does."

"George? You mean *that* George?"

Brannich merely nodded. No doubt about it any longer: Maude knew—if not all and everything—certainly enough to spoil his plans, to thwart his dream and deny his ever reaching the goal.

The Dream: to see what's on the other side of the mountain

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—just to see what's there. It's always been a prime drive in certain kinds of men. Oceans were crossed thereby; mountains climbed, and wastelands left behind. The great grasslands, the great food areas of the world opened up. Out of that, out of things like that, and men, more people got a chance to be born.

Why then is it so funny to wonder what there might be up there and out there where the stars have their abodes? Willing, truly, to eat and *like* that humble pie, Brannich admitted the fault, if fault it be, within himself. He wanted to go to the stars. He wanted to see what was on the other side of the mountain. Just to see. Just to be able to say he'd been there.

DEEP, DEEP inside himself, Brannich felt the faint thalamic itch that portends the birth of a great idea. His *rationale,* deep and shallow both, had been counting up. The counting did not weigh so well for his plan, but his emotions had kept on rejecting defeat ...or change. Now—maybe. If.

"Maude." Brannich looked straight at her, and acted as if what he had to say were for her ears alone. "You tell me something." He made sure he spoke loudly enough into the silence that came, so that everyone would hear everything. "Have you got a secret clutch somewhere that you train in real procedures?"

Initiative: that's what Maude Akers called Big Brother's naming himself Societal Therapist. Brannich could not equal her in politics, but he was mechanic enough, with an assist from Newton, to apply Hegel's law of contradictories: *a thing has no being except in its own negation.*

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

On Maude Akers' face: an interplay of anger, regret, deliberation, and acceptance. The bird's out, the fat's in the fire, and there's no use locking the barn door after the horse has strayed.

Brannich had given this panel of Members something to think about. He had used a word, a concept, supposed to be completely expunged from

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their experience, their *gestalt*. He had hinted a secret ordering of ways and means. To them, mystics one and all, that could only suggest some arcane cabal.

"Unca Lloyd, what's a secwet crutch? 'N what's 'at word you said? Is p'oceejures like one of my dance routines? 'N could I make up a numba' about it?"

LITTLE SISTER, still With It and For It, and coming through exactly as Brannich had planned on her doing. The action. Now he had only to wait for the equal and opposite reaction—just as sure to come. So that wasn't the hard part. The difficulty lay in somehow s i l e n t l y communicating to Maude Akers. To get her to know he had carried through a part of his plan; that he had used these people, had made them perform exactly as he wanted them to.

He looked hard and straight into Maude's eyes; then sent his own gaze drifting up and down the panel, swept it over the Coach-Patriarch, looked back to Maude once more. She got his message. She, too, examined the Members of the Team.

All the Team Members had become, on the moment and the instant of Little Sister's question, as bored as they had been fascinated by Brannich's words to Maude.

Ideas—expecially new ones—are hard to come by. Nothing new under the sun. Except gimmicks. And if you've spotted the idea for a new gimmick, all you can do is drop it when it turns out that somebody has beat you to it, has already put it into a routine. . . even if your fields happen to be as far apart as Shamanism and Interpretive Dancing. Or reading palms. Or getting Who's-it across the ice. Or anything else. You drop it. And even a politician must allow the other guy his own idea.

THE MYTHOS CONTAINS WITHIN ITSELF THE SEEDS OF ITS OWN CONSTRUCTION . . . THE REACH OF FAUSTIAN MAN IS UPWARD AND TO THE INFINITE. . . W O R K IS DIRECTED PLAY.

"Unca Lloyd, you din't answer my qweshon."

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True, Little Sister, I didn't; nor has Maude answered mine.

HE HAD TO keep his boys in the backroom, had to know Maude would keep her Vestals. With a new purpose, with a new end. Not just to produce successors for themselves—a one-to-one ratio: but to produce real and genuine human beings in the John Dewey tradition. Fully realized in their own potentials. And fit to go to the stars.

So, while you explain to Little Sister, exact your demand from Maude: *a boon for a boon.* Let Maude witness that you can get her off the hook, demonstrate that you can make of what she feared to be the thunder of chaos something much less than "a tempest in a teapot."

Tell Little Sister that it isn't a crutch, but a clutch, a device for the transference of torque —from which (but do not tell her that, do not speak that aloud, even to Maude Akers, yet) came your idea—and phonie it up somehow, so she'll believe it. She has to believe, since she is only the Little Sister and you are the Engineer-Constructor. Tell her it is not a 'secwet' nor even a secret, but a *Siegred* clutch. A great invention. Like Brunhild. Like the Niebelungenlied. Any old crap. But exact your boon from Maude Akers.

"All right, Lloyd. It's all yours. Your ball. Carry it."

Carry it.

He had to. Just that. Maude the Center, had passed the ball to him. Not tossed it back the way a catcher would to a pitcher, but *centered* it! As if he were in the backfield. The expurgated and banished backfield. All members of which, unlike cleancut All American boy linemen, are out for what they can get. As Brannich was. Admittedly. Out to get to the stars.

'All right, Lloyd. It's all yours. Your ball. Carry it.'

WITH THOSE simple words, Maude Akers could once more make Brannich feel that he was Little Brother seated for the first time on the immediate left side of an all-wise, all-seeing, stern yet kindly Matriarch. Fully aware of his every secret thought, his

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every glaring fault. *All right, damn it, I'll carry!*

"Engineer-Constructor Brannich would proceed with his Psychological Re-integration. Will the Matriarch kindly have the Specific Charge read into the record?".

"What do you think it is, Lloyd?"

Brannich had not even bothered to think of that. He and the boys in the backroom had planned his conduct so that some Member or other would be bound to accuse him of playing Out of Position—that is, usurping somebody else's field. "Why, it must be OoP, isn't it?"

"No, Lloyd. It's Goofing Off."

This time Brannich felt himself exploded, rather than squeezed in—but the feeling was just as bad if not worse. More of a helplessness to it. Nothing to grab onto, no anchor; and he direly needed one. Cornered rats fight; man tries to stave off the inevitable.

"Me?" Brannich made his tone plaintive. "Goofing Off? *How?"* He did get sureness and emphasis into the last word. Maude couldn't possibly know that he had been, unless...

She locked gazes with him, open-eyed, unrelenting, and for the moment entirely without the kindness and understanding he had always felt to be ideally the person and *Persona* of Maude Akers, Matriarch. "You've been experimenting with perpetual motion, Lloyd."

He had been.

It was possible that Maude Akers, out of the vast fund of her knowledge, would know his experimenting—as Master-Engineer-Constructor—in perpetual motion must be deemed Guilt of Foul and Goofing Off. It was impossible, though, for her to know that he had actually been doing so, unless somebody had told her.

LLOYD BRANNICH had not told her, so the traitor had to be the only other person out in the backroom who knew. The Little Brother—no longer Little Brother, because banished into the awful menialism of working with his hands—whom Brannich had already chosen as his successor.

A kid, like Brannich himself

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at that age, who was always tinkering around trying to find out the WHAT and the HOW of things, but absolutely unable to care about the WHY?

A boy who, by the merest of all chances, happened to be Lloyd Brannich's own son. *My son, my son!* During the Sullan persecutions in Rome many sons yielded up their fathers as traitors to the regime, but no—count it, no—father ever ratted.

...and here Lloyd Brannich felt in his belly, not a sickness exactly, but more a conviction that he never wanted to eat anything again. As though in his stomach there throbbed a terrible swollen hollowness that could not ever be pierced, that could not allow food and sustenance to enter for continuing life again. *I've been let down...*

NOW THE awareness of Maude Akers speaking again, her words bouncing into and around, around, and around in that mnemonic echo chamber, senselessly.

His *gestalt* had become jangled confusion. The Members of the Team reacting in their various ways—mumbling, pulling ear lobes, scraping a canvas chair, petting a bloodhound. Maude saying something that was just a noise in his ears. Himself, without volition, without conscious direction, somehow already inside Torchie, and seating himself in the chair. Not knowing, not caring about his plan anymore...just going through motions, because they, the motions, were to be gone through.

Then another jangling—a loud, irritating disturbance: the introduction of another cause-effect chain, nagging at him, pulling the attention he refused to give it.

"Father, Father!" The feel of a young hand clamped on his wrist, the slowly wakening awareness that somebody—bodies?...things?—had burst through the door. The suddenly intense registering sight of a boy-child's cheek, and eyes tip-tilted in their corners. *My son, my son!*

"Jerry? You? Here?"

"Yes, Father, I'm here. But listen to me! You've got to get out of there. You mustn't try to go through with it. George has taken over! He's got con-

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trol of everything. Torchie, too! He'll do something bad to you. Get out, get out of there!"

"Take it easy, son. Easy. George is only a machine. An 'it'. A machine can't take over anything." Brannich lifted a hand to run it through the tow-sled hair above the worried little brow. The hand wouldn't lift.

"He can; he did! He's got his servo-mechs lined up around himself like an army. These, too!"

IV

BRANNICH looked, Brannich saw; and on the instant he felt his automatic upward surge to protect his son thwarted. The comparison of Torchie's chair to the Iron Mary was good—in the matter of restraint, that is. Where the Iron Mary accomplished its holding with knives in its enveloping arms, Torchie's web was a soft, resilient one, but immobilizing just the same.

Brannich could only—with great, great effort—turn his head on his paralyzed neck to watch the flexible tentacled, rolling on their godamn silent wheels, mechanical monstrosities carry his boy out of Torchie's bounds. See them, just as the helmet came down to black out his vision, array themselves like guards at sentry, to keep all others away.

Implacable: a thing not to be placated, not to be pleased, the cool unreturning lifeless hardness of steel. Inexorable: rigid and unyielding; without feeling to be moved by entreaty, prayer, or emotion. A machine, a functioning machine, somehow *desperately* trying to communicate with him out of the sentience he had given to it. He, himself, and all the other guys like him.

Impossible. Machines cannot communicate. Machines can not think. Machines can only work. That last touch, there: the gist, the germ of an idea. And the feeling within his head again of something alien, utterly, yet O so familiar! trying to tell him something. A thing that could not talk, trying to talk. Trying to put in—blank—what *word* for 'word' when there can be no words—trying to... ideate.

Frantic, Brannich thought:

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I'm actually going through re-integration. The real thing!

NO...

CLEAR AND absolute came the idea of his thought negated. In substitute, a kind of symphonic conviction of a never-before-experienced-therefore-unnamed amalgam of communication and symbiosis: a man and his machine, together, in perfect harmony, at work, getting the job done. Together.

A team, capable in their togetherness of accomplishment far and above the ability of either one alone...so why was Brannich attempting to demolish the Teams? Why was he monkeying around with the proven impracticality of perpetual motion?

Clear came the concept, the asking of the question, with a feeling—not a feeling, but a kind of attitude, even *gestalt*—that a true and loyal servant, a perfect worker would have—no, *be*—if he came upon the boss doing his job when he came back from lunch.

Brannich had got with it, with this team, maybe because he was what he was, and could never be anything else. The love, the joy he felt in using his beautiful, beautiful piece of equipment, must somehow have its out-showing in its opposite number.

My machine keeps on working for me.

As it must. And will. But...

Damn it! A machine is an 'it', a thing, not a 'him' nor a 'he'! Not alive. Not capable of thinking, nor responding.

No need. George, (the concept of an entity not an entity, but of a dynamic something that works, that does) George knows. A machine turned on and working, works. Then a question that came out in human terms about like this: Why sit at the table and try to butter your bread when you have left the loaf at the grocery?

MAUDE AKERS had brought the charge of Goofing Off against Brannich. A fair charge; he had been. Maybe too much, so much that it had driven him goofy, even to the point of dreaming all this up.

That, George (entity not entity) cannot do...

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What?

Dream. The word itself, not even the idea, did not exactly come out. Only that there must be some kind of cause to make the effect noted: Brannich had been fooling around with impractical perpetual motion. *That,* George knew. George did not know why, could not ask why, for 'Why?' must entail kindred knowledge, empathy, of motive. George just worked, he wasn't motivated.

Yeah, well how come you caught on?

And here...hesitancy? No. Evasion? No to that, too. George couldn't do either one: both needed emotion behind them. Not even a *pause* in its human sense, a time for thought. Just a space of time that went by until like successive squirts of a grease gun this ideated chain came out...

George's job is to do George's job, and to KEEP George doing it. George is the perfect slave, a *working*—not a thinking—machine. George *being,* works. Not that he likes to, not that he has to, he just does. It is in the nature of things. *De Rerum Naturae.*

GO CLEAR back to the beginning, the days of World War II, when the first fumbling, stumbling steps were taken. When Automation was so far away it was still called *automatization,* or even Technocracy. Planners and designers even then realized that eventually you'd have to make your push-buttons do everything but push themselves: self-servicing, self-maintaining, self-replacing.

And even then, way before the great teachers—Trial-error, and day by day practice—began, the basics were there. The Wheatstone Bridge, the automatic pilot, circuits wired in series AND in parallel, operating in series until failure when your solenoid became de-energized, switched over to parallel and spot-lighted, or 'dark'-lighted your trouble for you. And a little toy that you could drive into a nervous breakdown.

That had been the one, the Big One. Couple of guys Goldberging around. 'Bread-boarding'...y'know. Took the 'Go' and 'no Go' guage idea from the automatic lathe. Job to do, duty to perform, means of telling when it's done. Now put in a scrambler for random—at

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least a lot of, and plenty of, mixed-up conditions. Great, it worked; but like the coffee mill that turned the sea to salt, it did not know how to quit when the job was done. Once finding the answer it kept on turning it out, forever. Keep working, try this, try that; rip out, put this in, till a day comes when one of you, watching the crazy antics the last hook-up has caused, says to the other: "Damn thing acts like it's drunk."

ZINGO! You've got it. What does the wise boss do to show his worker he's done a good job? Puts extra bonus in the pay envelope. But what does the super-wise Boss do? He buys the worker a drink as soon as the good job is finished.

So, the end result: three push-buttons; on, off, and buy George a drink. Have safeguards, of course. Make your 'drink-buying' push-button a function of, and only of, the whole complex, the whole *Persona* and personality of your Master - Engineer - Constructor. That only the boss may pour from the bottle. When the boss is satisfied, he buys.

A certain helmet, out in the backroom, for that purpose. No need to put it in the safe, no need to lock it up. If anybody besides Brannich tried to put it on, he couldn't. He would not any longer have a head it could go on.

For each new Master, a new helmet; and a custom, a ceremony, that grew out of his first donning it. The new Master-Engineer-Constructor sat down at a desk in full view of the outwardly plain and unimpressive cube blocked around the fantastically complex innards of the Master Control Unit, of George.

On the desk in front of the new Master were two things: his helmet, and a bottle of whatever kind of booze he happened to fancy. He put on the helmet; he opened the bottle, and he and George got drunk together. Real drunk.

Brannich caught himself up short. Why should he be going back to his own experience at it? Why remember a thing that was only a kind of shame, a thing inexcusable if it had not had the demands of custom and tradition behind it? Why, indeed? Except that...well, why

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does any associative chain begin? Because it's triggered, it's kicked off, by something common to the original chain.

SHAME AND shame alone, the after-glow, or plainly hangover, had been for Brannich. He had no mysticism in his make-up. Any Member of the Team would have been transported by the combined feeling of symbiosis and togetherness—the working as a perfect team, that a Master felt getting drunk with the Master Control Unit.

"GEORGE!" Brannich spoke aloud, realized he had, and concentrated in silence once again: *"You're drunk!"*

A hubbub of impression, a hodge-podge of feeling and ideas not ideas—not human, interpreting themselves in human terms.

A boss, told his prize worker was sick, passing by a dime beer joint, spying the culprit, and hurling an accusation at him. A beery, teary, crying-jag denial, followed immediately by ratiocinationed license. What would the boss do if he found himself fired? Go out and get drunk—only thing to do. But the Boss could not know. Never know how 'tis. Boss didn't have boss. Swell boss anyhow, couldn't stand to be fired by him.

Crazy, though. Monkeying around with idiot stuff like p'petual motion. Got idea go kiting to stars. Leave poor George all 'lone. Nobody have drink with then. Poor, poor George. Bad boss, mean boss, drunk alla time. 'S matter with him. Drunker'n George, that never touches the stuff. George no fool, sober as judge, could show boss what he's after.

PERPETUAL motion impossible in Jeans-Eddington Universe. Boltzmann. Second Law Therm' dymam-ics. Boss thinks he's smart. Says merely out to improve efficiency of epicyclic engine. Thinks get space drive that way. Haah!

Boss ought know where look, like George knows. Space drive already figured out. Da Vinci. Just didn't have power. Had whole dope, knew; like all greats that Configuration of Culture: Galileo, Copernicus, Torricelli, Newton. All knew. All out for same thing Brannich

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after. Spaceflight. Not Rocket Power.

Proof: s equals ½ gt². Definition: Acceleration is a change IN DIRECTION, or velocity. And you can only put it that way when you're thinking of a body in *free fall.* Thought Da Vinci after a helicopter, eh? Haah, and again, haah! He, Da Vinci, was out to command DIRECTION in a freely falling body; and that, Chum, is a space drive.

Only rockets work 'vacuum, hunnh? How about Jack in the Box? How 'bout precessing gyro? How 'bout cycloided eccentric? Put 'em all together, got it. Got your drive. Use p'petual motion, get economy, more efficiency, okay. But don't go way Stars 'n leave poor old George 'lone, nobody drink with. Boss too old go anyhow. Send kids. Bring 'em right.

That was my idea, but I haven't been able to join the Team. I haven't changed into a Baseball Nine. I'm still without the vote, without influence.

A sudden stark feeling of withdrawal, as if, he, Brannich, watched a friend speeding away on some kind of vessel over which he had no control. A waving of goodbye, and a last desperately shouted word of advice that failed to carry over the intervening distance.

A hazy, hazy image, blotchily visualized: a star rampant on a...??...a truncated pyramid-like thing, supposed to be ...a...comet's trail...?

LLOYD BRANNICH, Master Engineer - Constructor, man of practical things, without a bit of mysticism in his make-up, realized himself seated in an Iron-Mary-like thing combining the worst features of an electric chair and a dentist's engine. Over there what might be taken for a space-ship's control panel... might be, but never would be after Brannich showed them what a Spaceship should look like. *That George and his servo-mechs are gone, and your boy called you Father instead of Chief?*

No, the difficulties lay over that way. The Members of the Team. What good a Star Drive if you had no one to send up there and out there? The Team... Hurray for the Team!

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Just as his desultory study of them told him that Maude Akers was no longer there, the idea hit him. The idea that had begun to germinate way back there a few minutes, a few aeons, ago. Before he had gone into Torchie.

Clear, sharp, came the thing he had tried to visualize: a Star, well enough, but not rampant on a comet's trail. The new symbol, representing Brannich's own status, to replace the old one of non-letter winning Waterboy on his office door.

WHO, NOT of the team, still leads the team?

Who gets the prettiest girls in school? Not just one, but three or four of them, always crowding around, always dangling their dance programs before him, while they ignore the big, dumb, aching goons who've knocked their brains out—their hearts, too—on the field of play? Who's always clean, always special, always at the head of the parade?

Who wins, not only a letter, but one solely and uniquely his own? Who, of course, but the Yell Leader? A Star, indeed, not rampant on a comet's trail, but emblazoned on a megaphone.

Without difficulty, Lloyd Brannich freed himself from the trappings of Torchie. As he rose to his feet, Maude Akers came through the door. He waited until she had resumed her place, then, calmly and simply told her and all the other Members a new idea had come to him. He mentioned their known dislike for his Waterboy symbol. He intended to change that, for the new idea, the new thing he had become, and must remain.

He would now lead them in a yell.

"Good play, Brannich!" The Coach-Patriarch once more knocked over his folding chair in his enthusiasm. Little Sister pirouetted in her Ophelia numba'. The Poet quoted: "Tell me not in mournful numbers, Life is but an empty dream. . ." Big Sister, with scientific exactitude, located just *the* spot on Brannich's head that would bespeak such genius. The female Kissing Cousin tore her blackface doll in twain, and gave a half to each of her bloodhounds. The So-

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cietal Therapist took off his greaves and put on his devil mask. And Little Brother stuck with the kootch dance tune.

MAUDE AKERS showed, for the first time Brannich had ever witnessed, the unsureness and worried anticipation of the female caught in the act of running a sandy on a male of her own kind. To his boy, he said he would accept no apology for the lad's forgetting himself, and calling the *Chief* 'Father' that way. He knew the boy had been under stress, but he had discovered the filial term 'Father' was actually music to his ears, and would the boy please continue to call him that?

Maude obeyed his beckoning finger, followed him to a withdrawn and quiet corner where they could not be overheard.

Ossa on Pelion and them on Olympus. Paradox on paradox, piled one atop another until they have finally cancelled themselves out, have solved themselves. The only way to join a team is not to join it. The only way to get your machine to perform at optimum, is to forbid it the chance so to perform. To gain a son, you first must lose him. To gain an end that only humility achieves, be full of arrogant pride.

Great stuff, but to be possible there had to be a kicker in the deal. Maude Akers had been out of the room. George had acted drunk. George got sober, Maude returned. Paradoxes are solved only by gimmicks: "The truth, Maude. The New Matriarch gets a helmet, too, doesn't she?"

"Yes, always made up by the Old Master Engineer. It's the one secret he keeps from the new Master. Are you mad, Lloyd?"

For answer, Brannich grinned, turned to the Team Members, and spelled out the next yell: *"S T A R S, to them, yeeeayy!"*

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Special Article

SPACE LAW

by Harold Gluck, Ph. D.

At this moment, the following article is speculative — but soon, many of its speculations will be fact. Space Law has already started to come into being, and the first case — that may come up very soon!

THE SPACESHIP *Baulso* was one of the old-timers, built about the year 2035. At present she had been turned into a combination freighter-passenger affair. She was owned by the Austin Transportation Company and made special charter flights—or, when business was slow she operated as a "tramp" Spaceship picking up whatever business was available on the Planet-Asteroid Run. Just now she was three months out from her last stop, Asteroid NEWO, and headed for Earth. Her captain was George F. Harrison. They had no other stops to make and in a month's time should land at Earthport.

Most of the passengers were accompanying their special cargo units in the *Baulso*. There were also three honeymoon couples taking advantage of the low rate. At the moment, all the passengers were in the big Recess, watch-

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Accidents will pose knotty jurisdictional problems in the space age...

ing a picture on the screen. There was a slight lurch but they didn't seem to mind it.

Five minutes later, Flight Engineer Belton Eisenwell told the Captain the sad news.

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"We ran into a meteor stream. Left starboard engine number two is completely out of shape. Can't be fixed. And number one may go any minute."

"Can we continue our voyage with those two engines out of commission?" demanded the Captain.

"Only if we jettison half the cargo," replied the Flight Engineer. "And the sooner the better."

The passengers, according to regulation 32, were notified of the situation. It had been decided to jettison the entire shipment of Magison Ore.

"But I'll be broke if you do that," protested Herman Frank, who owned the cargo. "Five years of prospecting gone to waste."

Not exactly. For here in this situation, they would follow the rule of Admiralty law. Dumping his cargo helped save the others' their cargo; therefore the others share the loss with Herman Frank. It's worked out on a percentage basis. There will be similar situations in which we will be able to take a time-tested law and use it as part of our Space Law. We can look at another situation aboard a spaceship.

THE SPACESHIP *Donago* is one that makes the Saturn-Earth run and flies the Saturnian flag. She is owned by the Metsia Corporation with headquarters at Bunia, Saturn. Just now she is about three weeks away from her destination, Earth. Aboard the ship is a citizen of Venus by the name of Seita Godona; he has been acting strangely.

He turns around to one of the stewards and everybody hears him shout. "I'm sick and tired of the lack of attention you have been giving to me. I don't have to stand for your insulting manners. I will fix you right now."

Before anyone can stop him, he whips out a little Destructo pistol and blasts the poor steward into Nothingness.

Definitely, this was murder; but what law is to be applied? The Venusian code permits a member of the Tertiary Order to kill anyone insulting him; and, alas, Seita Godona is one of these rare nobles. If he were on Venus, nothing would

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happen to him. Earth Code provides for a complete psychiatric examination; if found unstable he is sent away to an institution. The Saturnian code provides Death for any killing—no matter what the excuse or provocation may be.

The law is based upon the flag of the spaceship, so that in this case the Saturnian code would apply. But what happens when we get situations which are new? Then new law will have to be created by the Inter-Council Space Group, representing all the planets in the first Galaxy. Suppose we take one of these new situations.

THE SPACESHIP *Waspo* is one of the new experimental type built by the Inter-Council Space Committee. Her fuel is the unstable element, T.32. Scientists are all well aware of the great risk to be taken; if that element gets out of control, you actually have a wild Space Bomb capable of destroying a planet. But the goal is considered worth the risk, because now you can make a trip into the Second Galaxy and back. The year is 2345.

Yet, you must protect the people on any one of the planets. So a new law is passed —to the effect that if the element does go out of control a priority message will automatically be sent out. It means that every spaceship must at once converge in a given orbit and destroy the spaceship carrying T.32—regardless of the consequences to the spaceship involved, and also its passengers. The penalty of refusal is instant death when apprehended; no excuse permitted.

You might say that though this is new law there is a basic understandable principle at the base of it: Namely, that the well being and safety of a larger group is so important that the well being and safety of another group may have to be sacrificed for it. We do this with Eminent Domain when we may force an entire group to sell their homes so that the approach to a needed bridge may be built. But in our civilized countries we haven't as yet carried it to the extreme of forcing somebody to die to save more people.

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THERE WILL be many Space Laws that look like exact copies of our Earth laws. For example: To protect the Diagrooms on Asteroid 45a from becoming extinct, we have a law exactly like the one we use to protect seals. And the health inspection laws for people on spaceships will be a logical extension of our health inspection laws. Nor will there be anything new about the way we treat the Space Hi-jacker.

You might say that all of this is in the future, though within the realm of possibility. But what about today and tomorrow? How about the Moon? And the Space right above us? What kind of laws do we make?

We all know where the Moon is and the function it performs in regard to this planet. What do we do if a spaceship from Earth Power A lands there and claims the Moon? What law will apply?

The answer to that depends upon something else to which we need an answer: Is the Moon inhabited and are the inhabitants capable of defending themselves? The great continent known as North America was there all the time; the trouble was that the redskins were incapable of defending themselves?

For the moment turn this situation around. Suppose a canoe of Indians had sailed up the Thames in the year 1452, with Chief Shmeeralot and his magic golden arrows. He might have shouted, "Look, I found this place. In the name of our Indian tribe, I take possession of it."

The proud and sensible Englishmen at once retorted: "What kind of nonsense is this? You didn't discover us because we have been here all the time. Now beat it before there is trouble."

There *is* trouble—but not the kind the English anticipated. The golden arrows do their trick, and soon England has been "discovered and conquered." Chief Shmeeralot then applies Redskin law to this area. We must understand clearly that the basis of the law of discovery and occupation of inhabited territory is based upon force.

NOW IF the Moon if uninhabited, Power A claims

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it has the "right" to take possession of it. This is based upon the law that the first power on Earth to find an uninhabited hunk of territory, and make an effective settlement, can claim it. But we might, on the other hand, say that the Moon was there all the time and can't be claimed by anyone. Result? Either negotiation or War.

But there is the third possibility, which is taking place now—namely the establishment of principles of law that will be binding on all the countries on this planet, so that in effect we have a Space Law set up here.

We have as a precedent the International Court of Justice, the League of Nations, and the United Nations. However, any law that can't be enforced, and which does not provide penalties for its breaking, isn't law.

However let us go back to the Moon for a few minutes. Suppose the Moon is inhabited and we find the Lunarites have a civilization, a kind of law, can communicate with us—and are strong. What then?

A complete space law would then have to be worked out in conjunction with them. If they are unfriendly and want to fight, we might end up with the Lunarites imposing their concept of Space Law upon us.

For a few centuries, countries agreed upon a principle of International Law that the boundary of said country extended within an area of three miles from the shore. All other waters were "open waters."

However schools of valuable fish knew nothing about this rule. They might be within the three mile limit, or about twelve miles from shore. So recently we find some countries beginning to assert that this three-mile law no longer applies. It has been said that the origin of the three-mile rule was the fact that, at that time, a cannon ball fired from a ship or from a fort on the water front would travel only three miles.

THERE HAS been trouble about this new extension of the water boundary. Shots have been fired at fishing boats, and gunboats have gone out with their decks cleared

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for action. You have economic factors behind this clash. Years ago, it could safely be said that a property owner "owned the airspace above him." Actually we have had cases wherein property owners were compensated when their airspace was used or interfered with.

The airplane now flies up high over many property owners' airspaces, and they can't collect damages. But we do have safety regulations about how low a plane can fly, and also a regulation of the noise it can make. In our space law, we will extend this principle. And we have the situation facing us right in the face just now. What about a spying satellite?

A spying satellite is making the orbit around Earth at a height of say, 29,000 miles. It goes over our country. It contains a special television spotting camera and other detecting and mapping devices. Sent up by Power B. What do we do? Do we send up a killer satellite to put it out of commission? Or do we send up one of our own spying satellites?

My assumption is that we will have a Space Law covering the entire actions of the countries of this planet. Our country could go to war with country B over this matter; but it is inevitable that we end up with some kind of United World federation with a world enforced space law. To be practical about it, there are only two powerful countries in this world; if they agree the rest is easy. If they don't, then the victor will run things. I think they will agree.

So that right now, and for the next few years, the bulk of those Space Laws will cover a variety of safety factors. When and how dangerous wastes may be dumped into outer space? What kind of an emergency space suit is to be standard equipment on a spaceship? What lanes will be set aside for different kinds of spaceships? There will be sanitary precautions to prevent the spread of known and unknown diseases; we'll have invoice and import regulations.

Assuming that we are the strongest of all planets, then there will be laws covering ex-

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ploration and the use of different planets and asteroids. There will be disputes and lawbreakers, so that we actually will have to have some sort of Space Patrol to enforce Space law.

I hope I live long enough to be able to practice Space Law, with an office on Mars.

The Reckoning

"Flame of Life" went down rather well with most of you, although one reader did send in a letter starting off, "Please register this as a loud, long vote AGAINST running further reprints in your magazine." But, on balance, the response must be considered favorable, as the story received a number of first-place votes and — most important of all — those who rated it lower considered it only as a story competing with other stories in the issue. Not as a "reprint".

The question isn't closed; you can open it yourself by sending in your letters and post cards, etc. Some have suggested that we confine our selections for "second look" to the 1941-1943 period, as copies of these issues are more difficult to find these days than some of the earlier issues. Sounds reasonable. And specific nominations from you are always in order; and will be followed whenever possible.

The final article in the "Race Into Space" series by Thomas N. Scortia drew a great deal of comment, mostly favorable. Those who rated it lower declared themselves opposed to the heavy technical type of article.

The box-score for the issue, then:

1. Survival in Parallel (Mathieu)	1.56
2. Signs of the Times (Howell)	2.00
3. Flame of Life (Long)	2.60
4. Love & The Stars — Today (Wilhelm)	2.67
5. Obey That Impulse (Harris)	4.00
6. And Then He Went Away (Westlake)	4.76

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A is for automation

by Kate Wilhelm

They called the brain "Sarah", and it did almost seem to have a personality. Nothing could go wrong; no human hands need touch the product that Sarah made. But Old Mike knew that Sarah had to be watched — and knew why!

G. B. LED the admiring group of men down the ramp that wound to the main floor, and gestured expansively, "And here they come out boxed and stacked on the outgoing belt ready for the boxcar."

"A marvel of engineering, Mr. McKeldridge. A marvel." Senator Williams beamed at the young president of McKeldridge, Inc. The plant was in his state, and he had the proprietary air of a new father.

"To think, not a human hand touched those toys." Mr. Schultz of the chamber of commerce was staring in fascination at the conveyor belt with the precisely-spaced toys being deftly boxed and stacked. At that moment, the whole stack of the boxes began to move in a slow, smooth movement toward the immense doors at the other end of the plant. The door opened upward; the boxes were carried outside the building and neatly deposited in a waiting freight boxcar.

"That finished the carload," G. B. explained. "They were automatically counted and weighed so that they came out exactly right. There will be two

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more carloads before the order is filled. Great seller, I understand."

One of the men started to remove a toy from the belt, and G. B. hurriedly said, "You mustn't do that, Mr. Hammler. It will throw things out of kilter. Mr. Stacey, here, will tell you all about that later—but I should warn you that if even one of the objects on the belt were removed, the brain would stop the whole operation and make adjustments that would consume hours. It is geared to produce so many of the things in a given time, and has its own warning system if anything goes wrong along the way. We couldn't start it again manually, no matter what."

The under secretary of defense quickly placed his hands in his pockets and looking abashed, asked, "But how can you people afford to retool and still underbid everyone else for this government contract?"

"Ah, but we don't retool." G. B. smiled benignly at Mr. Stacey. "Gentlemen, here is one of the greatest authorities on automation living today. And he designed the brain that controls this plant in such a way that she—that is—it," he glanced about guiltily at the slip, "does all the necessary work about changing over for a different product."

He gave a passing glance at his watch and suggested a recess of the tour. "This afternoon, after lunch, Mr. Stacey will explain how that part of it works. Suffice it to say right now that this order for these toy robots is the third order we have manufactured without adding a piece of machinery or taking out a piece. All that is in excess is stored at the highest level up there until it will be needed again. It was expensive—but in time saved and ease of operation, it has already paid for itself. And with this government contract assured us, the monetary value of it is finally paying off."

THE OFFICIAL photographer took some pictures then and the others waited until he was finished. There were fifteen of them in all, and they all had questions to ask about the operation, the comparative cost of the machinery and brain as against human pay for the same work.

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"That's the beauty of the thing," G. B. said. "Once the machinery is paid for, there are no further expenses connected with it other than a few technicians who feed it additional data for each new order. And, of course, the checker, who happens to be either Mr. Stacey or myself at the present." He smiled deprecatorily, "At first, there was some hesitation at accepting merchandise that hadn't at least been looked at by humans—but that has gone, now that the thing has proven itself. We do a spot check. Every hundredth toy has been channelled away from the rest and into our office for inspection. From there it goes back into the line to be boxed with the others."

"And to think that no man or woman actually works in here." Senator Morrison sighed pompously, "What will they do when all the plants are automated this way? I can see trouble ahead, if we don't begin planning now for it."

Quickly his colleagues in Congress said, "We'll have to bring it up with the President, Senator—perhaps write a bill or two to handle the situation." They dropped back to discuss it fully.

G. B. WAS pointing out the most interesting angles to the photographer when Mr. Stacey said, "But there is one person here. Remember Old Mike, G. B.?"

The group turned as a person to G. B.

"So a human *is* needed after all?"

"I didn't think it was completely automatic. That day hasn't come yet, although it will. It will."

"All machinery needs a human brain to direct it, no matter how well it functions."

"Who is Old Mike?"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen." G. B.'s smile was a trifle forced as he put both hands before his face. "Really, I almost hate to tell you after all that. But I shall, anyway. Old Mike is as necessary as the lights. Which aren't. The brain doesn't need the light to see by, any more than McKeldridge, Inc. needs Old Mike. But for sentimental reasons we keep him on. And will continue to keep him on as long as he wants to continue with us."

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G. B. turned, as if to leave it at that, but they pressed him for a reason. He said, reluctantly, "My father stipulated in his will that Old Mike was to stay on as long as there was a plant, and he wanted to work in it. So you see, there's nothing that can be done about Old Mike. I believe he calls himself the watchman. As you have seen, the place is burglar-proof, and there's absolutely nothing that can burn up—and there are signals to cover any contingency that could conceivably arise. Therefore, no watchman is necessary. But the old man doesn't want to retire, so we permit him to stay on. I believe he saved Father's life some fifty years ago when a press got away from the operator, or something like that. Anyway, Mike was injured in the accident, and Father was determined to make it up to him some way. This is what the old fellow wanted."

He did turn and lead them away then; and high in the building, Old Mike turned off the television screens that had let him follow the tour from one section to another.

"Fools! Everyone of them, fools! Marvelous place! Hah! Place could blow up and them not even here to know it," he muttered to himself angrily. "Gadgets! Nothing but gadgets." He spat expressively. Old Mike was seventy one, and walked with a limp that became progressively worse each winter; but otherwise, his health was excellent. A constant source of irritation to G. B., who wanted him retired and out of the plant, the old man refused the armchair and pension that awaited him.

He had laughed at the doctor at his last examination. "Tell that young smart aleck that my pappy lived to be a hundred," he said, and cackled all the way back to his tiny office.

HE KEPT up his running line of disconnected conversation to himself most of the time when he was alone, ever since the night that he had found himself speaking to the brain as if it were a person. Calling it Sarah, the way those cocksure engineers did. That had frightened him, and following the scare had come hatred of the machine.

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"No-good thing. Wanting to be a person. Think you're getting smart don't you? Making things without nobody telling you how or pushing buttons even. But you're just a hunk of metal. That's all you are. A hunk of metal with some wire running around inside you." So he talked to the machine on the occasions he forced himself to visit the brain. Every Monday he stood before it as if to reassure himself that it was, after all, just a machine. He always backed out of the room that housed Sarah.

Mostly he stayed in his office with the screens turned on, and he read or dozed and talked to himself. And lived with his memories of the past. "Them was the days, boy. This place was alive then when old Mr. McKeldridge was running things. He sure could make the place hum when he stepped out and looked around. And we knew who was boss them days. No sashaying about and getting machines to do man's work for him, no siree bob. He knew what men was supposed to do, and he saw to it that they done it." He added darkly, "If God had a wanted the world run by machines, He'd a put them here instead of decent men."

His alarm tinkled softly on the hour, and meticulously he scanned every screen to make sure that the plant was in operation as it should be. He watched the overhead conveyor belts in their perpetual motion of supplying and storing parts and surplus. He looked in on the great wall, where the lights flickered off and on continually, as Sarah guided the work electronically. He watched the metal being unloaded and spray-painted; stamped out and pressed into shape; and finally, the interior works being riveted in, and the whole robot come from the packing belt ready for the boxcar. Satisfied, he leaned back in his rocker and took out his pipe. Then with a puzzled look he turned once more to the close-up of the robots as they glided down toward the boxcar. There was something...

LIMPING badly, he hurried down the ramp that transversed the building, and came to the belt he had just scanned. With a frown, he hobbled to the office used by G. B. and

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Mr. Stacey jointly in their inspection. There was the prototype of the robots made to the specifications of the toy company that had ordered them preparatory to their Christmas rush.

"I knew it!" he exclaimed gleefully, and was startled at the sound of his own cracked voice above the ordered hum of excellent machinery. "I knew that dad-burned thing would mess up somehow," he said more quietly. "Just wait til Mr. Smarty Pants sees this." He clutched the toy to his chest and hurried back to the line, where he snatched another from the belt. Instantly, a buzzing alarm sounded; abruptly, a sudden silence filled the vast plant that was more alarming to the old man than would have been a siren at that moment.

He ran in his awkward gait to his office to collect his coat and hat, and cast an apprehensive glance at Sarah, whose whole face was filled with the lights flashing their messages. He hurried from the cavernous quiet of the place to the downtown office where G. B. conducted his business, chortling again once away from Sarah's building.

"You just tell him it's Old Mike, and he'll see me," he said to the pert girl behind the desk.

"I'm sorry, sir, but he is not to be disturbed. I have his direct orders to that effect. If you will be seated..." She motioned to the spacious reception room, luxurious with overstuffed chairs and low tables done in shades of brown from a coppery red to a nearly black mahogany. It was a room meant to impress, and Old Mike was suitably awed by it as he hesitantly took a seat, self-consciously aware of the two robots he was holding. The girl paid no further attention to him however, and continued her typing as if he weren't there. She answered the phone from time to time, and each call received the same treatment that Old Mike had been given: G. B. could not be disturbed. G. B. was in conference.

SUDDENLY, she was galvanized into action by a caller. A stunned look of fear and excitement passed quickly over her face and she said,

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"Hold on a minute, Mr. Lawrence. I'll tell him. Yes, I know it is serious. Hold on." She bit her lip and unconsciously tugged at her girdle as she arose and approached the door to the inner office. Hesitantly she stopped and returned to her desk where she whipped out a paper she had been typing; her fingers flew as she tapped out the message for G. B. Then, clutching the paper purposefully, she opened the door and entered the room.

Only moments later the door opened again, and Mr. Stacey came out on a run. He spoke into the phone quietly but with an urgency, nevertheless. He listened a moment, and then banged down the receiver after telling the other one to stay where he was. As he turned to go back into the office, his eye landed on Old Mike watching curiously. He nodded curtly and started to turn, but he spun around instead and shouted, "Where did you get that?" He seized the robots Mike was still holding and demanded again, "Where did you get it? Did you stop the line?"

Mutely Old Mike nodded and pointed to the toys, "See? Look at them!"

Mr. Stacey stared at Mike in wonder, "Old man," he said, "do you know what you did? You stopped the line entirely! Every engineer employed by McKeldridge has been notified automatically, and is on his way down there to see what went wrong. The government men are here to sign a very important contract and you stopped the line! Are you crazy!" He grabbed Mike by the sleeve and pulled him after him, "You just come with me and tell them what you did!"

INSIDE the office, the men were talking excitedly in low voices, obviously trying to avoid directly staring at G. B. and not succeeding. Only the Secretary of Defense and G. B. were silent. G. B.'s fingers were drumming monotonously on the conference table as he waited for his lieutenant to come back and let them all know what had happened. There was fury behind his quietude.

"Old Mike did it! He removed a robot!" Mr. Stacey held up the two toys to show them. "Whew! What a fright for nothing. We should have

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trusted Sarah not to let us down." He laughed, and one or two of the others followed his example. The Secretary of Defense didn't.

"Are you sure that's all that happened, Mr. McKeldridge?"

G. B. turned to Old Mike and asked in a softly ominous voice, "Did you remove one of the robots from the belt, Mike?"

"Yes, sir." Mike looked around the faces and saw the smiles grow more and more numerous as relief settled in on the men. He didn't volunteer more in the presence of outsiders; this was company business.

"And was the line moving smoothly when you removed the toy, Mike?" G. B. didn't look up as he asked, but played with his pencil instead.

"Yes, sir, it was moving—and then it stopped, and I come over here."

"That will be all, Mike. Wait for me in my office, will you please." G. B. turned back to the Secretary of Defense and shrugged, "You see, Mr. Secretary, foolproof. Even tells us when something goes wrong, if it does." He waited until Mike was nearly out the door, but still within range, to add, "And I can assure you that this won't happen again."

IT WAS TWO hours later when Mr. Stacey and G. B. remembered Old Mike. The old man was staring out the window over the city when they returned to G. B.'s private office with well-satisfied smiles on their faces. Mike still clutched both robots to his chest defensively as he turned to face them.

"Mike, why'd you do it? And now of all times." Mr. Stacey spoke to him as he might to a child, very patient, willing to try to understand.

It was to him that Mike thrust the toys, "Look at 'em, Mr. Stacey. Sarah's changed them." He waited, an expectant smile about his withered lips.

"Of all the damn fool nonsense! Mike, you're finished! Get out and stay. Get yourself a room somewhere and keep out of my way!" G. B.'s face was apopletic as he pushed Mike toward the door.

"Wait a minute, G. B.... Look. There *is* a difference." Mr. Stacey stood the two robots side by side on the

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gleaming desk. "Look—this one is nearly two inches taller. And more flexible." He was speaking absently as he compared them.

Forgetting Mike for the moment, G. B. watched. Finally he said, "It doesn't alter the situation. Mike nearly cost us the contract with his meddling. So someone tampered with the specifications. It still works, doesn't it?"

"Better. There's a wrist action we didn't have in it, and it's more powerful." Mr. Stacey didn't look up as he made measurements and jotted down his findings on a small pad. "And I wouldn't fire Mike now, if I were you. He proved Sarah's infallibility better than words could. This could be important—and he was the first to catch it." He added wryly, "Besides, it would mean bad publicity."

G. B. threw up his hands and exclaimed, "OK, OK, so Mike stays. But, old man, if you so much as breathe on that belt again, you're out. Do you understand?"

Mike nodded and shuffled his feet awkwardly as he looked apologetically toward Mr. Stacey. "Is it something really wrong, sir?"

"Hmm. Don't know, Mike. I'll run back with you now. I want to see for myself what has been changed and who did it."

MIKE WATCHED the engineers as they examined the various parts of Sarah. It was well past midnight when Mr. Stacey came to his office.

"Doesn't seem to be anything wrong. We're letting the altered version go through. Did you see who coded and gave her the new data?"

"Nobody's touched it since you fixed her up for these things." Mike had both of the robots standing at attention on his small, littered desk. "Ain't been no one back there 'til today." He paused a moment and added soberly, "She done it herself. She's trying her wings, so's to speak."

Mr. Stacey laughed good-naturedly and left, after saying that Mike should let him know if anyone went into Sarah's room. "Someone did it who knows exactly how, and that narrows it down—but no one will admit it. Probably afraid

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of a chewing out."

After he'd gone, and Sarah was appeased and back at work, Mike cautiously stood before the ever changing board with its thousand eyes. "You can fool them, Sarah, but you can't fool Old Mike. You done it yourself, and I know it. But no more shenanigans out of you, cause I'll be a'watching. You hear me, Sarah? I'll be a'watching all the time."

The change-over went smoothly. Mr. Stacey, and several other serious-looking young men, worked in Sarah's room for two whole days giving her the new information in her own special code. They kept a constant watch until the first few of the new items to be manufactured were finished, and then they departed jubilantly.

Watching on his television screen Old Mike grinned to himself, "You old fool," he told himself genially, "See. She can't do a thing without getting showed how. You just always forget after awhile that they got to show her, after all." He was happy at change-over time. It served to remind him that Sarah was a tool, bigger and more complex than any of her predecessors, to be sure, but a tool, useful only so long as a human hand and brain guided her.

ONCE MORE, the belts were waltzing their silent, gliding fairy dance high above the floor. And the conveyor belts loaded their baskets with screws and tubes and wires and carried them to the tool that was designed to lift them and place them in their proper position. The humming filled the rooms in perfect harmony and the lights blinked in tune as information was brought forth to be put to use, rejecting one tool for another, keeping the raw materials flowing smoothly into place, punching out the coded orders for additional wire or plastic or whatever was needed. The messages dropped into a minor appendage of Sarah where they were changed to typed sheets, folded and placed in stamped envelopes and deposited in the chute that a messenger constantly sorted for delivery.

Mike dozed and smoked his pipe and made his timed inspections. He examined the finished product carefully, but

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could make nothing of it; and as no one had bothered to tell him what was being produced for the government, he shrugged his thin shoulders and went on his own way. "Figure I'm too old and useless to know anything that's supposed to be a secret. Might blab. Why, I can remember way back when the old man was here and we did that order for the Navy, back during the Big War. He said to me, 'Mike, see them shells. Biggest ever cast. We'll blow them off the map with them shells, Mike.' He knew he could trust Mike, he did."

THE GOVERNMENT men inspected the hundredth ones just as G. B. and Mr. Stacey had done before. And always they came from the inner office, where there wasn't a television camera, with smiles on their faces. Then after awhile, since the hundredth ones came during the night as well as during the day, their inspection became more haphazard, and finally almost ceased entirely. The orders were being boxed and stacked and readied for the boxcars as before. No one entered any more, unless it was with an escort and a special pass. Now when the great door opened, there were soldiers with guns on their belts to oversee the operation. Two of them climbed into the freight car with the order being shipped out, and the third man sealed the car. The mammoth door whispered a goodby to them as it slid back down and another crate was being slipped into place for the second part of the order.

And Mike, who had in the past gone to his lonesome room each night, moved into the office entirely. He left long enough each day to gulp down his frugal meals, and make the few purchases his barren life required—such as tobacco and the newspapers. There was an inner tension that he couldn't dispel, nor could he understand it. Nothing could go wrong. Nothing. But he watched. He knew this was big. Bigger even than the shells in the Big War. They hadn't called for such secrecy.

"So that's why they asked me all them tom fool questions and took my fingerprints and picture. They must have

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figured that since I wouldn't leave the place, they had to be sure of who I am." He hobbled again to the inspection room and looked carefully at the thing on the desk left there for comparison with the others that left the line for the inspection. Even as he watched, the opening in the wall admitted one of the newly-finished things. Old Mike knew, from keeping his eyes and ears open, that there were ten minutes in which to look over the displaced object before the line stopped as before. Gingerly he grasped it and lifted it. There was nothing to see. Just a box, closed on all sides. He compared it with the one on the desk and as far as he could see they were identical.

HE REPLACED it on the belt and presently it began to glide back toward the main line. With a frown, Mike sat behind the desk and stared at the thing before him.

"Got to be something more important than a box. I seen wires and them new small tubes going in somewheres. Must be a special way to open them things." He tried to force each side of the box, with no better luck than with the other one. He rubbed his chin thoughtfully and forgetting the strict orders he had not to interfere again, he began to go through the desk looking for a clue. There was none. Then he surveyed the safe in the room. He knew it was geared to alarm if tampered with, but on the other hand, the government men had seemed to get careless at the last about making the required inspections; maybe they had got careless about the safe. Besides he only had a couple of years left with McKeldridge anyway. G. B. would see to that as soon as he no longer feared unfavorable publicity, he argued with himself.

Hesitantly Old Mike approached the safe. It was one that G. B.'s father had installed only days before his death some ten years ago. Very modern, very burglarproof, very impenetrable. Mike grasped the door handle and it swung open. He ignored the papers and blueprints and documents, and instead fastened his eye on a thin strip of insulated wire with a bulge in the middle of it. He remembered seeing small holes

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in the thing on the desk. Quickly he had the ends of the wire in the holes and the opposite side of the box slid open. There was Sarah in miniature.

The same lights, only they weren't blinking at him, watching him, as she did. The same type of feed slot with a very small spool of ticker paper wound ready to go into it.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Mike said reverently. "Sarah's babies! Baby brains!"

HE LOOKED at the thing he was holding fearfully, and very gently—as if afraid of awakening a sleeping child—he placed it on the desk. Then he wiped off his wrinkled forehead which had grown very moist. "Baby brains," he whispered again and in his mind visualized the next war with things like it directing the fighting and the maneuvering, very much as Sarah directed the plant itself.

"This must be the heart," he said as he looked again at the lump in the middle of the wire that made the connection somewhere in the center of the brain. "Must stay asleep until the heart thing is connected, and then it's ready to go to work." Cautiously he disconnected the wires and the back of the box locked itself shut again. Still apprehensive of the tiny brain, he replaced it in its former position on the desk and restored the wire to the safe and shut the door. Then he made his way slowly back to his own office and waited.

"They shouldn't of showed her how to make brains. They shouldn't of done that. She's no good," he muttered to himself. "Gotta stay wide awake from now on and see to it that she don't cut no more capers. They shouldn't of done it." He repeated the words over and over in a worried voice.

The movement of the winding belts and overhead conveyors was hypnotic in its effect on him; that was why he had installed the clock in the first place. The melodic alarm roused him if he did succumb to the languor the place produced in him. "It's better not to keep watching all the time," he told himself, as he had done countless times in the past four years. "That way, your head begins swaying back and forth and you get to nodding. It's

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better to look at each screen for a minute or two and then go on to the next one," he reminded himself, but he couldn't tear his eyes from the assembly line.

Here the tubes came down, and intricate movements were made, too fast for his eye to follow. Next the shell was put around them, and from that point nothing could be seen of what went in. The whole belt rose and fell and went forever forward. Up and down and on and on. One basket of something or other was emptied and another replaced it with a motion so precise that the interval was too fast for the parts it carried to be missed. The empty basket climbed higher and higher, shuttled off the main line once as something else bypassed it on its way down, and then resumed its way to be replenished.

MIKE ALMOST missed the extra movement, but in the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse. One of the larger tools was being lowered. Slowly, quietly it came down, and there was no disruption of the belt's steady flow. A press seemed to move fractionally out of the way, and the newcomer might have been there all the time for the disturbance it created. The next box to come down the line stopped before it, and a new action was added to the others.

Hurriedly, Mike turned on the screen that showed Sarah herself. That one he usually kept off, since it always made him feel as though *he* were being studied seeing the lights blinking at him so insistently. There was no one in the room.

"She did it again!" He picked up the phone with a trembling hand, and with fingers that seemed to belong to someone else he dialed the number Mr. Stacey had given him. "Mr. Stacey! You gotta come over here right now. She's changed something again." His voice was shrill and incoherent as he shouted into the phone, and it was minutes before he made the engineer understand what he was trying to say. "I'm telling you, Mr. Stacey, I seen that thing come dropping down right before my own eyes. It weren't there up 'til now, and now it's in there doing something, too, just like it belonged there."

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He gloated over Sarah while he waited for the engineer's arrival. "I told you to be careful, Sarah. I told you I'd be watching you all the time; didn't I?" He even went to her room and stood before her in his relish. "You know what will happen now, Sarah? You know? Well, I'll tell you. They'll tear you down and see what went wrong. And you won't be able to do any more for a long time. Maybe never, if they get to thinking that they can't trust you. Then we'll have men in here again telling you how to make things, like God intended. And there'll be men out there to see to it that you do it right, like God intended. And you'll be a tool again. Sarah! Who ever heard of calling a tool by a name?"

HE MET Mr. Stacey by the small door that led to the street. There were guards out there who looked at him curiously as he limped toward Mr. Stacey, nearly choking in his excitement over the error. "I told you, she can do things! She did it again! And I seen her! I told you there weren't no one in there before. She just done it herself."

"Ok, Mike. Take it easy now and tell me what happened. You know, if there's any real trouble we'll have to shut down and clear it up, don't you?" He eyed Old Mike doubtfully —but remembering the altered robots, he could take no chances. "Come on to the office and tell me what you saw."

Mike told him and together they inspected the line. The machine was gone.

"It was here, Mr. Stacey. It was! Right here next to this press. I tell you I seen it with my own eyes. I seen it on the screen and I come down here and seen it again. She's moved it back up there so's no one wouldn't find her out."

Fear and frustration began to replace the indignation on Old Mike's face. "She knew what I was telling her," he whispered. "She must of known what I was saying." He backed away from the line and only the pressure of Mr. Stacey's hand on his arm saved him from falling as they returned to the office.

Mr. Stacey looked at Mike kindly and asked, "How old are you, Mike?"

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"It isn't that, Mr. Stacey. So help me God, it isn't that!" Mike screwed up his face to keep back the humiliating tears that dimmed his eyes momentarily. "I don't blame you, sir. You don't know her like I do. My pappy told me once that you never know a woman until you live with her, and I've lived with Sarah for four years now, and I know she's no good." He thirstily drank the water he found in his hand and wiped his mouth with the back of his knuckles.

MR. STACEY frowned helplessly at the old man. He paced back and forth across the room several times before he finally said, "Mike, if what you say is true, Sarah could be dangerous. But who would ever believe you? No," he held up his hand to stop the words that Mike was about to utter, "Listen to me first. I saw that robot, and I'm almost convinced that none of us did it. *Almost,* mind you. Mostly because it was an improvement, and no one would hesitate to claim the credit—but on the other hand, to admit that Sarah did it, well, that's equally ridiculous." He spread his hands wide apart in a gesture of defeat. "So you see, I can't accept your unconfirmed story that the machine did come down, but I don't dare just forget about it. Now what can I do?"

"Stop the line and make sure!" Mike didn't hesitate over his reply.

"That would be fine if this thing weren't so important. But it's a rush order and it's as vital as hell to the government right now. You follow the international situation, don't you?" He nodded at Mike's affirmation. "Well, then you should know how things stand right now. We need these things, and we need them right now. Yesterday, even."

He frowned some more and said slowly, "No, Mike, I can't stop the line, but we'll post such a guard that no movement that's made will be undetected. And I'll seal off the line from anyone other than myself and one or two others who have top clearance. That'll mean you'll be barred, too. No one will be allowed in where he can tamper with anything. And we'll see, Mike. There won't be any

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more machinery coming down from up there."

THE SERGEANT yawned his boredom and began to shuffle the cards. "More pinochle, old man?" He had been stationed in the small office for three nights, and he was tired of pinochle. But he didn't have much choice, as it was the only card game the old man knew and Mike was certainly too old to begin learning any new ones.

"Eh? What did you say, son?" Old Mike didn't take his eye off the screen. Inwardly, he was laughing at Sarah's impotence in the face of continual surveillance. There were men stationed at the head of the ramp, and more by each door, and more on the outside, and another right here in his room checking the entire plant with him each hour. She had her hands tied good now, did Sarah. He didn't permit the laughter to come to his lips, but he thought that Sarah could probably hear it, anyway. He, Old Mike, had fixed her good this time, and he could sense her anger.

"Skip it. What's so interesting down there anyway?" The sergeant moved around the desk and watched the flickering lights for a few minutes. His eyes shifted to the belt that swayed and rose and fell rhythmically. It was as quiet as the night itself; only the motion of it indicated that the plant was operating. The humming was so a part of him by now that he was unaware of it. His eyes followed the belt coming down, a box with drawers suspended from it by a hook affair. The line came down and paused infinitesmially, and once more started to climb, the box staying behind. It climbed in a broad gentle curve and was transcended by another box coming down. The sergeant's eyes were drawn to the second belt, and then again to one rising and then to another circling. His head began an unobstrusive swaying action in time with the line as he continued to watch the undulating movement: up and down, back and forth, up and down, back and forth, up and down. And stayed down.

OLD MIKE, not noticing the other's staring eyes now

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fixed glazedly on the floor, continued to watch the flickering lights on the panel that was Sarah's face. "You see me, girl?" He said the words to himself, but he was sure that she heard. "You see me in here? I'm laughing at you, Sarah. You tried so hard, didn't you, but I told you I'd be a watching you all the time. And Old Mike caught you, didn't he?"

He found his eyes being drawn back and forth across the board as the lights changed their pattern and he chuckled out loud. "You do hear me; don't you, Sarah?" And his eyes went back and forth across the board trying to read a message in the changing lights that regarded him for a second and then blinked off. It was a game that he had played ever since the security people had decided to guard the interior of the plant as well as the outside. Mr. Stacey had seen to it, as he had promised. And each night Old Mike goaded her mentally, and tried to make out a message in the board. A sign from Sarah of her defeat.

He wasn't aware of the fact that the pacing feet outside the door had stopped; that the sentries on the head of the ramp and patrolling the floor were staring in evident fascination at the intricately moving belts; that the press had once more moved aside and the other machine had once more come silently down and was working; that other machines had shouldered in beside those already on the floor and were also working; that the crate with the miniature brains resting inside it was maneuvered aside and another, much larger one now stood in its place and was being filled with larger boxes, boxes grooved so that each one on a casual glance appeared to be four lesser boxes. Old Mike was trying to read a message from the pattern of changing lights.

THE GUARDS were due to change at six; and at five thirty, the larger crate was once more shuffled behind others that minimized its size. The extra machines silently began their climb back to the ceiling to circle endlessly until next brought down by Sarah. The guard at the head of the ramp shook himself slightly and re-

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sumed his steady pacing, noticing with satisfaction that his tour was nearly over for another night. He threw a wave of greeting to his pal showing briefly between the machinery on the floor.

The sergeant turned again from the desk and asked peevishly, "Are you going to sit there all day and watch that thing?"

Old Mike hid his disappointment well as he answered, "I'm heading for bed, same as you are, Sergeant." He knew she would try nothing in the daylight when there were so many wide awake people around. She had almost spelled out something; he was sure of it. That first time, he had thought his eyes were playing tricks on him, but tonight he was sure that she was trying to get a message to him. "Well," he thought to himself, "let her stew about it until tonight."

He yawned and shook his thermos to see if there were any more coffee. Great thing, coffee, on an all night watch; it certainly kept him awake. He shared the small amount remaining with the sergeant and was rinsing out the cups when the shift changed.

Later he made his usual call to Mr. Stacey. Usual since first he saw the machine lower itself. "Quiet night, Mr. Stacey. She's behaving herself now that she has people around to make her be good." He listened to the other man for a second and laughed in a croaking tone, "Well, I'll tell you, sir, I was getting scared. First you showed her how to make the bodies, and then you showed her how to make the brain for them. I figured that she was going into business for herself." He hung up still laughing and shaking his head over his foolishness.

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The Creator

by Ross Rocklynne

Suddenly Elaine was gone, and an utterly strange entity came out of the night of mind and being to confound Phil Graydon.

THE MASKED ball was in full progress, and from the terrace orchestral music sounded. In the shadowed part of the garden, Phil Graydon and Elaine James walked slowly among the rose bushes, hand in hand. A strange constraint had arisen between them, though each had known the other for years, and the girl thus walked along with a smile that had little meaning—or perhaps a secret one. On the other hand, Phil's face was set. He cast his eyes toward her frequently, but she was masked, as was he.

He did a strange thing. His bare hand lashed out toward the rose bushes and he felt the sting of a thorn raking through the soft flesh on the tip of his index finger. He said "Ouch!" in a surprised voice, before he realized he had done it deliberately. Then he showed the bleeding finger to Elaine. She looked up at

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him, frowning. "But why, Phil?"

He slowly considered the wound. He said, slowly, "Maybe you'd better take off your mask, for a while." She complied, sensing his strange mood.

He studied the soft, classically feminine features. He said, "If I had created you myself, I couldn't have made you more perfect." He added carefully, almost formally, "I must have done it deliberately. I wanted to feel a physical pain. I wanted to make certain I was real. Then I would know the world was real. And I had a feeling of loathing, looking at you with your mask on, for the mask did not let me see you, but something that was everything else that was not you."

"But why should you feel that—that things aren't real?"

"Last night, coming from the depot, I had an experience."

"You say it so alarmingly."

"Because I remember it well. If you've got the stomach for it, I'll tell you about it."

"Please do, Phil."

He spoke slowly, and as he spoke, her eyes darkened.

"Everything went black, with a darkness unimaginable; yet I was able to see the nothingness that stretched around me. I had physical sensations, yet had no body. I felt no emotion but a consuming terror that went beyond emotion. I was on the verge of madness.

"I was mad. I said, in a perfectly normal voice, 'Who was Elaine?' Should I go on?"

He was silent. Her breast rose and fell. She said faintly, "Was there an answer?"

"An answer, yes. Somewhat in the form of an echo, hurled back from across the universe. The answer was a mockery. It said, 'Who was Elaine?' "

Elaine's eyes fell. She was afraid. She whispered, "And will it come again?"

TO THAT he desired to make no answer and they moved again toward the house, between the solid trees, under the solid, pendant Moon, the very distant solid stars, beneath their feet a solid eight thousand miles of lithosphere and nickel iron. It was then that Philip felt faint, unstable.

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In horror he grasped Elaine. He perked out, "You are Elaine."

And shortly thereafter, he was transported with abrupt transition from his momentary heaven with Elaine to a peculiarly horrible species of Hell.

Flowers and trees and bushes made a trembling, shifting, running blur. The ground whirled. Gravity knew no law.

The solid mountain lowered in the distance, shuddered, buckled, sank. A thousand foot wall of water rushed from the ocean to fill the gap.

The orchestra in the ballroom did not sound like the orchestra of human beings.

A monstrosity with pendulous lips, mournful, idiotic eyes, bloated biped body, and flapping, batlike wings, emerged from the night, and said, clearing its throat, "I will be your companion throughout eternity."

"Who are you?" Philip Graydon's eyes screamed, though his voice said nothing.

"I am Elaine, if you want me to be," the monstrosity gurgled imploringly.

It faded into its blurred, shifting background.

The universe pirouetted about Graydon. He fell.

ELAINE'S hands stroked his forehead. Her soft voice sounded. His muscles were relaxed, and he lay on the moist humus of the garden. The garden was intact. Above him was Elaine's midnight hair and her tearful face.

Music came from the ballroom. Couples on the veranda laughed. Philip Graydon said, "I'm glad you're here."

She whispered her voice breaking, "What happened?"

"I think I dreamed again."

"And it was the same—as last night?"

"Yes. But more horrible. Last night the monstrosity wasn't there."

"What monstrosity?"

He avoided her eyes.

She said, "All right. If it was that bad, Phil. Phil, will you do something about it, for my sake?"

"Yes." He drew her down to him. He thought, "I'll never really see you again after tonight, Elaine. Never, never, never, never, never, never, nev-

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er, never..." He stopped the thought.

He said carefully to Elaine, "I don't understand. I don't know what's going to happen to me or to you. But something is happening inside of me, something I can't stop. And there's only one hope."

Hope?

In his mind's eye, he saw the batwing monstrosity saying enigmatically, "I will be Elaine, if you want me to."

DR. PETER FARJEON was dark, small, dynamic. He sat with professional laxity as Philip Graydon's story tailed to a conclusion.

"And you think it was real," he stated.

Graydon puffed on his pipe. "I don't like the prospect of a psychosis. I'll admit it was unreal. I came to you because I wanted you to prove that to me."

"Your condition approaches a psychosis closely," said the psychiatrist bluntly. "Let's get to the root. You're willing to admit that what you saw or think you saw was impossible in our universe?"

"Certainly, in our universe. But perhaps I went across to a universe which doesn't exist according to our laws."

Farjeon regarded Graydon with the wholly frank expression which experience had taught him could be made to conceal certain thoughts.

Again he stated, "You have often felt that your surroundings, other people, the very universe were unreal."

"All my life," Graydon admitted. "But I've never felt that *I* was unreal. I've always had a strong sense of my own reality."

Farjeon nodded. He said, "Your dreams—we will assume they are dreams without quibbling—are the direct outgrowth of that strong sense of unreality. It is so deeply buried in your unconscious that if it were allowed to progress it would turn into a neurosis that would require years to evacuate. As it is, Graydon, you'll have to come to see me every day for six months. You're going to talk to me, about everything you ever did. And I'd prefer you to talk about the little things. Because, back in your childhood, something happened. Once I

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can convince you that it is that something which causes your present troubles..."

And Graydon regarded him with a quiet smile and interrupted. "It's no use, doctor."

"What?"

"You seem," said Graydon, "very unreal to me."

Something flickered in Farjeon's black eyes; alarm, panic. His voice was normal, although he knew that he was experiencing something that should send him to the brink of madness. "This feeling has been coming over you while we have been sitting here talking?"

"It's been growing stronger every second."

Farjeon said tensely, "Start talking. When I say talk, I mean talk. Start from a prenatal memory if you have one. Follow your life from its start to the present moment. Talk."

GRAYDON'S pipe fell. He would never know what became of it. He felt an internal convulsion. He sat perfectly still. Sweat exuded from his body. His eyes felt as if they were bursting.

"I'm afraid it's no good, doctor," he said in a gutteral hoarse tone. "It's too late. This thing has gone too far. For instance, you're turning into a sexopus."

Farjeon, who was turning into a sexopus, leaned forward, his eyes dilated and desperate and frightened. "I'm turning into a sexopus?"

"Yes. Now you are no longer a man. You are entirely sexopus. And there's nothing I can do about it." This last came in a tinny scream of torture, and Graydon flopped from his chair.

"You're a sexopus," he told Farjeon.

The tentacles of the sexopus who was Dr. Peter Farjeon waved in certain configurations which were the equivalent of speech. "Certainly I'm a sexopus. You're a sexopus, too. Why should it alarm you?"

"Because I'm a man," cried Graydon with his speech tentacles, flopping away from the creature in the chair. He flopped across a rubbery floor. He paused in horror.

He lay on the floor, a bulbous mass, gleaming with slime, his locomotive tentacles

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curling and writhing, his speech tentacles quiet. He was aware then that he could not get away from the horror in the chair, because he himself was such a horror.

HE CLOSED his quadruple eyes. Flashes of knowledge came to him, who he was, why he was here, what his place in this universe was. Much he knew that he did not know as a man.

Yet, he continued to reason as a man.

He thought, "This is another dream."

He opened his eyes.

The dream had persisted. Dr. Farjeon, the sexopus, had persisted. He had flopped from his chair, a basin-like affair radiating three spokes. He sprawled on the rubbery floor, watching Graydon with what Graydon knew was pity.

Slowly the speech tentacles of Dr. Farjeon moved. "Will you let me reason with you?"

Graydon said, "Yes."

"Remain perfectly still. These dreams are nothing. You have a peculiarly deep-laid neurosis..."

"You said that before. Then you turned into a sexopus. How do I know you won't turn into something else?"

Farjeon's quadruple eyes were unwinking. "If you want to prove yourself sane, follow my commands. Tell me about the dream you had just now. You said something about man."

Graydon had no trouble using his speech tentacles. They waved in the speech configurations. "Yes, I was a man. I had been having dreams. Horrible dreams of another existence."

"Of this existence?"

"No. It was a jumble. It was entirely unrelated to this one. I was a man. I had come to you as a man—and you were a man—and I was telling you my trouble; when suddenly you turned into a sexopus."

"Ho! I turned into a sexopus. Suppose you describe a man."

Graydon described a man.

THE INNER lids of the sexopus who had been a man closed. Graydon recognized it as a smile, unprofessionally derisive.

Farjeon said: "As two

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thinking, reasoning beings, we can prove to ourselves that such a creature as you describe does not and could not exist. For, you see, the man of your dreams is built on the principle that seven and four make eleven; or that ten and twelve make twenty-two. Therefore, we can dispose of man..."

Graydon's speech tentacles began to wave excitedly. "No, we can't. Because—my God—four and seven *is* eleven—isn't it?" He faltered.

"In your dream, perhaps it was. But in dreams, obvious fallacies are accepted as truth."

"Fallacies! I tell you that even now, it is perfectly logical to me that four and seven make eleven; and perfectly absurd that it should make anything else. What does it make?"

"Twelve. And ten and twelve, by the Law of the Accumulative Two, make twenty-four."

"Ten and twelve make twenty-four. My God. But how? Why?"

Farjeon was at a loss. He said: "It's an axiom, Graydon. The only means to prove an axiom is by the axiom itself—ah! Will you concede with me that zero plus zero equals one?"

GRAYDON said faintly, "In my conception, zero plus zero equals zero and nothing else."

"Ho! Equals zero, less than one? Come now. You can't mean that. Where, then, did our universe come from?"

"I wonder," Graydon said cynically to himself. He said: "Does the fact that zero plus zero equals one explain the creation of the universe?"

"Could anything else explain it? Our universe is here. It must have had a beginning."

"Yes."

"Since its source could not have been material—for such a source would need a source of its own—that source originally must have come from nothing. Or the coalition of sufficiently large quantities of nothing. You have no trouble following me?"

"None at all," said Graydon, on the brink of madness.

"The principle is evident. The subdivision of the neutri-

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no, the smallest particle possible, results in the creation of two quantities of nothing. Therefore, the addition of two such quantities to each other results in a neutrino, and the creation of the universe hinges on the Law of the Accumulative One; and takes place in any addition of numbers under ten. Over ten, the Law of the Accumulative Two takes effect; and so on up. The law explains completely why our universe continually gains in bulk, and why it will continue to do so until it has reached that changeless state which scientists call—and aptly—Absolute Minimum Emptiness. Therefore, during the addition of seven and four, both under ten, a unit accumulates, and twelve is the—Mr. Graydon!"

Graydon slid to the rubbery floor, writhing.

THE CONDITION ceased. His eyes snapped open. He would have screamed had he been equipped with vocal organs. But he could not protest.

The batwing monstrosity flapped dismally at his side, pushing its wings against a murk that stretched to unlimited distances. And Graydon knew that, though there was nothing to set his motion relative to, he was moving with frightful speed.

He had no body.

Mentally, however, he could feel his teeth clenching.

He said, in the strange way that was possible for him. "Go away, you devil."

The wings of the horrible creature continued to flap.

But the eyes, piggish, yet filled with an infinitude of mournfulness, turned on him. "It is not right," said the monstrosity, clearing its throat, "That I should go away."

Graydon was filled with loathing. He said in his pseudovoice, "Which is the real universe: 0 plus 0 equals 0—or 0 plus 0 equals 1?"

The monstrosity turned its pig-eyes on the far distance, as if searching for the answer. It turned back to Graydon, and spoke one word, and regarded him with the horrible promise of tragedy in its eyes.

"Go away," Graydon screamed, at last, throwing his imaginary arms about. "There's something about you

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that's awful—I can't place it—you disgust me—you exude a slime—where are we going?"

"To another place."

"You don't know where?"

"No, master."

"Why do you call me master?"

"Because I am to be with you forever."

"I don't want you to be with me forever. I couldn't stand it."

The bat wings flapped a little faster. "Yes, you do want me. Yes, you will be able to stand it. As soon," the pendulous lips promised, "as soon as you realize who I am."

"Who are you, then, you devil!"

"I am Elaine," said the monstrosity mournfully. "That is, if you wish me to be. And I know that you are longing for her."

GRAYDON screamed again, "Go away. You can't be Elaine. You never could be. You're—horrible. Damn you, don't ever come back."

The bat wings idled. The monstrosity fell behind and was lost in the murk. But his words drifted forward. "I will be back."

And then—

—facing Philip Graydon was another Peter Farjeon. But not exactly facing him. Rather, it was a condition which partook of equal quantities of facing, or being within, or without Dr. Peter Farjeon.

That which gave sight was a mixture of a brilliancy beyond calculation and a darkness past plumbing.

Dr. Peter Farjeon was a being of no size whatsoever, yet Graydon knew that he encompassed all the known universe within him, as Philip Graydon encompassed all the known universe within him; and as he and Farjeon occupied each other, yet were set apart from each other by a peculiar quantity or condition which could be represented by the unthinkable word...

"YOUR DREAMS are interesting pictures of the unconscious mind in action," said Dr. Peter Farjeon.

Graydon kept his mind fluxless. "Which dreams did I tell you of?"

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"Of one, the universe of man. And your dreams seem to have a certain coherence. For instance, the fantastic universe you describe in no way disagrees with a most unique universal principle which, as nearly as I can make it out, you refer to as distance. Yes, perhaps out of those dreams may come the solution that will explain all the contradictions in our cosmogony. The theory of distance. And even your concept of time has intriguing possibilities, though both concepts flatly deny the rigidity of the law of—"

Graydon, icily cold, led him on. "My dreams gave me a perfect picture of time and distance. But in my own—in the universe of which I dreamed, the mind of man was not capable of visualizing the concept of ——. I myself knew nothing of it."

"But now that you are in the true universe, you have no idea of what time and distance were?"

"On the contrary. I have perfect pictures of both time and distance."

"You mean to say you can define the terms?"

Graydon said, "Before there can be distance, there must be at least two objects. Before there can be time, the two objects must exert a change of state on each other."

Farjeon was distressed. "I do not comprehend that word which you call objects."

"We are objects. We are two objects."

"No, no!" said Farjeon, agitatedly withdrawing through the application of that quantity or condition known as ——. "We are—all. Graydon, this is something I do not comprehend. You have had a dream that is supernaturally real. I am beginning to think it was real. That this is another dream, yet real—a separate fiction in the minds of both of us, yet retained by other minds, as the universe of man has been destroyed by you, but retained by other..."

"That may be true," Graydon agreed, and his mind retched and sickened and he was borne away with a terrible sense of speed; and he felt beneath his non-existent body the coldness of a marble slab, and saw resting opposite him, wings folded over its bloated,

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disgusting body, the monstrosity who was to be with him always.

THEY STARED at each other, Graydon with building horror, the monstrosity with a deep gleaming hope somehow shining out of its mournfully piggish eyes.

"Do you know yet?" it asked eagerly.

"I think there is nothing to be known."

"Yes!" said the monstrosity excitedly.

"On the other hand, there is everything to be known."

"Oh, master, that is equally true!"

The creature flapped its odorous wings once, and stood crouched a little, its white naked arms extended toward Graydon, a pleading, inviting expression on its obscene face. "Make me," it gurgled imploringly, "Elaine!"

Graydon's stomach, where it should be, began to retch.

His face screwed up in wrath. His hands came out like claws. "You could never be Elaine," he screamed, and slashed out with his claws in terrible warning. The monstrosity vanished entirely, and abruptly another dream came to plague Philip Graydon.

HE WAS running, without effort to this strange, indescribable body that was his, but with infinite fatigue in his man's mind. He thought that he must have been running forever.

Beside him another being ran, and beside him yet another, and there were others, as far as the eyes could see, abreast of each other in a straggling line.

They ran through a blazing sunny day, across a plain that was level and monotonous and deadening to the eye, and there was a horizon far away where a deep rosy light glowed.

Graydon turned to the being at his right, and said, "How long have we been running?"

The being looked at him curiously. "That would depend on how old you are, wouldn't it?"

"I've been running all my life."

"Naturally. Otherwise, you wouldn't be alive, would you?"

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"I'm going to stop running," said Graydon with a curious smile.

"Am I supposed to be sorry? Or are you just being morbid?"

"Morbid?"

The being turned away disinterestedly. "If you want to stop running, stop running. Go ahead and disappear."

With a curious, twisted smile on his face, Graydon stopped running. The line drew away from him swiftly. The being to whom Graydon had spoken looked back in unbelief. This gave way to cold derision.

The runner said, "Already you grow smaller." He turned his head away, and kept up with the line.

GRAYDON stood still, watching the straggling line run toward the horizon with the rosy glow behind it. The line became smaller and smaller to his eyes, both in length and in height. The line of runners diminished and then vanished.

"They vanished to me. I vanished to them. My fate was no worse than theirs, though they ran and I did not."

His indescribable body sat down on the dust of the monotonous plain. For many hours he thought.

At last he raised his eyes. He who was to be with him always appeared from the gray distance, wings flapping dismally. It drew nearer, its small pig-eyes searching for relief on Graydon's face.

It cleared its throat. "You have not yet learned the truth?"

"No. Go away."

The idly beating wings beat stronger. The monstrosity went away without urging, and as it went, Graydon was in another universe.

Its laws were nothing that the mind of man could think.

Graydon emerged, and beheld the batwinged monstrosity again.

"Go away." The monstrosity thereupon went, and Graydon prepared himself for innumerable plunges into a chaotic group of cosmoses.

He experienced fabulous universes where the laws of the universe of man were as

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nothing. Always he emerged to face the batwinged monstrosity. And at last he emerged forever.

"YOU CANNOT escape it now," said the batwinged monstrosity, wings folded about it, splayed feet standing on a substance, pig eyes looking at Graydon through vast darknesses. "At last you must face it. You have learned much. At last you know; and of that which you know, you have had irrefutable evidence."

"Who are you?"

"I am your Elaine, if you want me to be."

"I do not want you to be. You are indescribably awful. Elaine was everything that was beautiful."

"There never was an Elaine."

"I held Elaine in my arms. We loved each other. How could you be Elaine?"

"You made provisions. I am the symbol of Elaine. I am the inverted symbol of Elaine. Your reason struggles against your reason."

Reason struggling against reason?

Where was Philip Graydon?

Was this Philip Graydon, standing here, in a certain place, on a certain substance, emotions gone?

But was all horror gone? He felt his thoughts being drawn into the whirlpool.

He said, "If Elaine was real, the universe of man was real. The others were actual figments, dreams. Otherwise, why would I long for the universe of man, which I conceive to be real and true, and not the others?"

"You built too complete a picture. You permitted the universe of man to persist too long. Therefore, you have diseased yourself. And you created the inverted symbol of Elaine and I am she."

The maelstrom was whirling ever faster.

"I created you from my mind," said Graydon.

"By a power you possess, and yet could not know you possess. Therefore, I am you, talking to yourself. And I am Elaine, who was yourself, who is in turn all that is, and all that is likely to be."

Then the monstrosity stepped forward, crouching,

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white naked arms extended. "Make me Elaine. You have but to think the thought and say the word."

"I will never make you Elaine."

An overwhelming grief returned to the pig-eyes. The monstrosity straightened. "You will never make me Elaine? Then you will never see Elaine."

It cleared its throat. "Never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never..."

"Stop," Graydon screamed. Then he panted, "Why did you say the word so often?"

"I wanted you to see the true infiniteness of never."

Graydon shook and trembled and turned cold and from his lips came the words.

"You may be Elaine."

IN THE place of the monstrosity stood Elaine, white and flawless and creamy and smiling. Her tender arms raised toward him, and she took a step. Graydon started toward her.

Abruptly, she was no longer there.

The monstrosity held its arms out to him, smirking.

Graydon stumbled back. "Elaine," he screamed. "Come back!"

She appeared again. She became the monster again. Graydon watched. Elaine came back.

"I am," said Elaine, "Elaine."

But again she was the monster taking a step toward him.

Graydon flung up a hand, finger outstretched as if to transfix the monstrosity.

"Get back. You were to become Elaine. You are all that is repulsive."

The monster said, "What promises I made to you were made to you by yourself. Therefore, blame yourself. If you do not know how to direct the power that will enable you to change me into Elaine, then you are paying for your folly in striving to retain Elaine, who belonged to the universe that diseased you, and no other. You tricked yourself into believing that in retaining me, the inverted symbol of Elaine,

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you were retaining Elaine, and therefore broke no law. You gambled. But I am Elaine, for you have said so. Therefore, accept me as Elaine. Or redirect your diseased conception of beauty."

GRAYDON retreated from the advance of the bloated biped.

"You must be Elaine, nothing else."

The monster flickered into Elaine, turned back again.

Graydon waved an arm violently, as if he were commanding the heavens to split. He cried, "You are Elaine!"

Elaine was coming toward him, smiling. Then the monstrosity, smirking in triumph.

Graydon stumbled back, impelled by the horror he knew.

He hurled the full force of his madding mind into his command.

And the monstrosity hurried toward him, arms outstretched, mumbling, "I am Elaine, master, you have wished it."

Of the real—the unreal—Elaine, there was nothing.

Graydon twisted his face into a twitching, diabolical mask of unholiness. His hands came out like claws and he shrieked,

"Go. If you be Elaine or the monster, leave my sight and my mind and let me alone with my emptiness."

HE STOOD in a certain place, on a certain substance. Of things other than himself there were none.

For a time he endured it, looking at the spot where the batwinged monstrosity last had stood. Then questions began to hum through his mind, and escaped through his lips.

"Who was Elaine?" he asked. The words were hurled back by a Cyclopean echo. "Who was the monstrosity?" The echoes roared and tripled and mingled stridently. "Who is Philip Graydon?" and though all the emptiness that composed the universe was Philip Graydon, he waited for an answer from some Being. Yet not even an answering voice was forthcoming with its repeated question, for no echo sounded.

★

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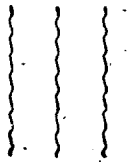

The Amazing Half-Million B.T.U. Autocrat

by Tom Hafstrom

THE AGING ingenue, wrapped in a misty white gown, sailed across the stage to an old fashioned floor microphone and sang in a husky voice:

> "You can get to bat in an Autocrat,
> The only nineteen seventy-eight car with scat,"

or some such thing. I refuse to be responsible for its accurate transcription. Then she burst enthusiastically into a lyric description of the car, accompanied by an orchestra notable only for its use of a cymbal to carry the bulk of the melody.

"Pshaw," I said, lapsing into euphemism for the benefit of my cat, who is rather sensitive.

I turned off the television and foolishly went to a newspaper for diversion. It carried a full front page color advertisement, stating pithily: "Autocrat for '78"

"Damn," I said. The cat dove under a chair and I went

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for a long rambling walk, musing on the general decadence of practically everything. I had passed through the virtues of Old Art, Old Automobiles and Old Sex and was sadly considering contemporary substandard fire brick and poorly calibrated Duff hygrometers when I found myself in front of the Autocrat showroom.

I UTTERED a tiny shriek of surprise and was about to pass on when I thought to myself in clear, concise terms, what the Hell. I shall go in and gaze upon their madness, all the while laughing grotesquely up my sleeve. So help me, that's what I thought.

After some riotous business with the automatic door—which somehow lagged in its reaction to my light, but dignified step—I gained entrance with but a scarcely noticeable wrinkle in my chest.

The showroom was unbelievable. Though the size of a small airfield, it was suggestive of nothing less than a great, gaudy jungle clearing. The walls were covered with creepers, rubber plants and other unwholesome-looking—possibly even carnivorous—flora. Even the large fountain in the middle of the room added to the effect, producing a muggy, tropical atmosphere, complete to something which bore a suspicious resemblance to ground fog.

The mechanical motif, however, quickly jerked back to reality anyone simple enough to fall into the jurassic stupor produced by their primeval decor. There was an ominous rumble issuing from somewhere underdecks and the floor itself seemed to vibrate with the sound. Near the entrance, amid the thatched huts, giving away punch, mild opiates and chances on a small oil field to be given away at some vague date in the future, the orchestra was playing wild Hungarian folk melodies.

POWER, was the theme of the Autocrat, power only hinted at in the advertising, but resoundingly applied through the wiles of a peddler's psychology.

I SLUNK through the milling crowd and made my way to a back corner of the room

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which was, by comparison, quiet and shady.

Evidently, the entire hall was bugged. As I leaned into one of the cars to fondle the price tag foolishly left there, I chanced to mutter some quiet shock symptoms. I immediately heard what sounded like a "Fighter Scramble" alert going off in the distance.

Within seconds, a figure appeared on the horizon. He wore the accepted uniform of the car salesman—a yellow plasti-tweed suit with spider-sized tufts sticking out like bushes from an african tundra. He sported the regulation coffee (roasted) tan, short (convict-cut) black hair and a mustache (platinum). He approached with a gold embossed business card held at arm's length, and began his spiel the moment he hove within hailing distance.

"Oh," he intoned with an ecstatic shudder which vibrated the longer tendrils of the tufts on his suit, "you are lucky to be among the first to view the new Autocrat, available this year for the first time in triple-tone, patriotic, metallic red, white and blue."

While he said this, he wrapped an arm around my shoulders—under the pretext of leading me over to the car—and jabbed me on a certain nerve in the neck with his thumb. This puzzled me somewhat at the time, but I have since realized the he was hoping to render me momentarily unconscious and i n d e l i b l y stamp his message upon my unopposing mind.

"NOW THIS particular model," he continued, indicating the six door sedan in front of which we stood, "is the Inverness; and those other two are the Valkyr and Maraposa, respectively. This is the only all, completely new car on the market. This year we innovate with such marvels as quantem-propulsion, hyper-gland drive, and oral-steering."

During this he had punched me repeatedly, until I turned to look at him at the mention of oral-steering, and he bent a finger rather badly on a pane of my glasses. He burst forth with a chortle, courageously straightened his finger and

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continued to sell, hard to the point of becoming crystaline.

"This," he said with some confusion, "is a car that does what it can look like it does." He shook his head in amused self-debasement, chafing his neck on the edge of his coat.

He reached inside the car and pushed a button, which brought to life a small motor that had only the slightest effect in raising the twelve foot hood. Slowly, as that coffin-like compartment opened, an eerie green light from the partially exposed well reactor flooded it and glinted in short spasms of light from the interior lead shielding of the hood. The salesman led me aside and we both climbed into cadmium-impregnated suits to examine the power plant.

"Although we are not stressing it," he told me, over the suit intercomm, "I can surely tell you that this is a half-million B.T.U. per hour system." He nodded proudly.

"And as for shielding—well, we have two tons of lead alone, not to mention the incidental cadmium and graphite. It seems obvious why the incidence of driver sterility in the Autocrat is less than half that of our two leading competitors."

HE GLANCED at his film badge and, finding that it was beginning to color, launched immediately into a quick appraisal of the finer points of the reactor and energy conversion mechanism.

"The conversion of the by-product heat of the atomic reaction into usable energy is effected without the intervention—for the love of Eeinsteinian physics—of a steam turbine as in the old submarines. We can thank our superior Autocrat scientists for that," he said with haughty professional pride.

"Watch that," he demanded, pointing to a glistening metal chamber sticking out of the side of the reactor.

"Are you watching?" came his voice a moment later from the interior of the cabin.

The careful reader may note that this was the first clear opportunity I had been given to speak since entering the showroom.

"Yes!" I said emphatically.

The chamber casing began

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to glow. In seconds it had passed through most of the spectrum and ended a bright blue, producing a hypnotizing pattern mingled with the reactor green on the inside of the engine compartment.

"Come here, come here," the salesman said excitedly.

I WALKED into the cabin and he pulled me foreward to the instrument panel. "Look," he said, indicating the dial marked watts. He began to giggle in low tones. The gauge was rising steadily toward a 1,000 mark.

"An elemental transformation of heat into electricity, that's what we're doing here. The heat enters a block of metal in the chamber and strips electrons off the relatively unstable atoms and, *voila*, electricity. It's good for years." He was laughing openly now. "Millions of billions of electrons in that hunk of metal. It'll last forever."

His face was changing somehow. He seemed a little sallow, his cheeks sunken. "Straight from the conversion chamber to the electric motor. Seven hundred horsepower."

His eyes seemed to glaze over, and his front teeth appeared almost pointed. "Power," he said in an inordinately loud voice.

SUDDENLY he reached over and flipped on a whole bank of switches in one motion. The windows opened. The front and rear seats began to go up and down, backward and foreward with a sickening effect. The radio turned on and went from station to station at five second intervals. A series of lighted cigarets issued from a hidden compartment in the dash, while the back seat television came on with a show featuring someone with the name of Boom Boom the clown.

The whole car began to rock as it automatically changed first a front, and then a rear tire, while a steady gurgle came from somewhere in the under works as it drained and lubricated itself. A warning siren came to life, indicating that in thirty seconds the car would dump its atomic pile.

The last thing I clearly remember is being drenched in

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lukewarm, soapy water as the car flooded its impervious interior for a cleansing and began to agitate like a washing machine. That, and a gargling shout of, "Power! The most powerful car..." I fear I didn't get the rest. I was, by that time, wending my swift and soapy way back uptown, mumbling and cooing to myself.

Just last week they let me bring my cat here to the rest home, and I made a little cart for her to pull. But every time I sit on it and yell, "Giddiyap, Autocrat," she just snarls. I wonder if her reactor is broken.

Readin' and Writhin'

(*continued from page* 17)

convincing-sounding spaceman talk and a carefully worked-out scheme for searching for lost spaceships will reward the reader; otherwise, there's not much here but padding. This item is not much of a credit either to George O. Smith or to Avalon, in view of past performances for both.

THE THIRD GALAXY READER. Doubleday, $3.95.

Doubleday, which has published an annual *Fantasy & Science Fiction* anthology for years, now adds a second such item to its list with this collection of fifteen short stories and novelets from 1953-57 issues of H.L. Gold's *Galaxy*. All fifteen stories in this third *Galaxy* collection (the first two appeared some time back from another house) bear the usual *Galaxy* hallmarks: skilled development, clear prose, and minimal cerebrality. The accent in *Galaxy* is usually on good writing and high entertainment value, rather than on conceptual intricacy. My personal breakdown of this volume shows five top-notchers, six readable and skillfully done stories of the second rank, and four clinkers of purest lead—not a bad score at all, as recent anthologies go.

The Class A stories include "End as a World." by F.L. Wallace, a sharp little vignette with a timely and attractive snapper at the end; "Help! I am Dr. Morris Goldpepper," by Avram Davidson,

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the uproarious tale of a dentist trapped on a distant planet; "A Wind is Rising," by Finn O'Donnevan, a fine action story; "The Haunted Corpse," by Frederik Pohl, an inspired farce of body-switching and Pentagon obtuseness; and "The Game of Rat and Dragon," by Cordwainer Smith, a strange, curious, and unforgettable story of warfare in space.

In the second category—worth reading but not notably outstanding—are "Limiting Factor" by Theodore Cogswell; "Protection," by Robert Sheckley; "Time in the Round," by Fritz Leiber; "The Model of a Judge," by William Morrison; "Volpla," by Wyman Guin; "Honorable Opponent," by Clifford Simak.

And, finally, the clinkers—three of them by science fiction writers of the first rank having off days: "Ideas Die Hard" by Isaac Asimov; "Dead Ringer" by Lester del Rey; "Man in the Jar" by Damon Knight; and "The Vilbar Party" by Evelyn E. Smith—all four of which illustrate, I think, some major faults of contemporary s-f.

Editor Gold's introduction, by the way, is a particularly sound discussion of the value of science fiction in this post-sputnik era.

THE COSMIC RAPE, by Theodore Sturgeon. Dell, 35¢.

The gaudy title disguises an expanded version of the 1957 *Galaxy* novella, "To Marry Medusa." Sturgeon's first science fiction novel since the 1953 "*More Than Human*" is a strange, intense, concentrated work, dealing once again with the theme of synergy that has obsessed Sturgeon for many years.

The Medusa of the original title is a galactic entity, a multiple mind which lurks in the distant reaches of space and which sends a wandering spore to Earth, where it becomes enmeshed with the person of Dan Gurlick, a shabby down-and-outer. Through Gurlick, the Medusa carries out its intention of first fusing humanity into a single race-mind and then affiliating that fused entity with itself.

Although the magazine version was less than half the length of this Dell edition, nothing essential was omitted: several lengthy episodes simply were condensed to several paragraphs without altering the story substantially, since the book's story line is not the typical one of setbacks and climaxes, but an unconventional straight-line pattern without

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digression, that rises continuously until it reaches its conclusion.

The technique is panoramic, and, amazingly, comes off; the book is marvelously compact, despite its abridgeability, and every paragraph contributes to the final resolution in a triumph of fictional carpentry. *"The Cosmic Rape"* has the compressed impact of a poem. Those readers who can enter into its peculiar mood will probably never forget it.

DESTINATION, INFINITY, by Henry Kuttner. Avon, 35¢.

This one was called "Fury" and bylined "Lawrence O'Donnell" when serialized in *Astounding* in 1947. The long-overdue paperback reprint gives us all the more reason to mourn Kuttner's loss—and his defection, during the last years of his life, to the ranks of the detective story writers. This story of life in the undersea domes of Venus a thousand years hence was one of Kuttner's best, a vivid and splendidly-constructed adventure story. It is probably the ideal work with which to introduce the new generation of readers to the Kuttner skills. (The byline gives no hint of the fact that the book was actually written in collaboration with C.L. Moore, Kuttner's wife.)

METHUSALEH'S CHILDREN, by Robert A. Heinlein. Gnome Press, $3.00.

When "Methusaleh's Children" appeared as a serial in *Astounding* eighteen years ago, it was hailed almost at once as a classic—one of the many classics Heinlein was producing in his incredibly fertile 1940-42 period. I, too, thought the novel was first-rate stuff when I read it in magazine form—and I continued to think so right up until Gnome Press released this new and slightly expanded version. A re-reading after all these years makes me wonder just how this particular segment of the justly-famed Heinlein Future History series has earned the exalted reputation it enjoys.

The story-line is meager. In the year 2125, it is made known that a eugenics project dating back 200 years has created some one hundred thousand long-lived Earthmen, some of them 150 years old and more. The inadvertent disclosure of the existence of these near-immortals touches off a vast public clamor to be let in on the secret (which is, Heinlein says, simply to choose long-lived grandparents.) The hundred

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thousand, fearful of their lives, hijack a newly-completed starship and go off to plant a colony in the stars. They encounter two alien races, run into colonizing troubles, and, in despair, return to Earth, only to find that their difficulties have conveniently been solved in their absence.

The rambling story is largely just a synoptic chronicle, spotted here and there with patches of convincing action. The characters have only occasional vividness—Mary Sperling, just beginning to show her age at 183, is well depicted, as is the short-lived Administrator, Slayton Ford. But the main figure, the immortal Lazarus Long, is a familiar Heinlein stock item, The Man Who Gets Things Done—wise-cracking, irreverent, efficient, and resolutely non-intellectual. The rest of the characters are nothing more than names.

And the background detail, usually so impressive in a Heinlein novel, is poorly focussed here. Some of the exciting early chase scenes have clear settings; the rest is vague and ill-defined. The book as a whole lacks firm core. Since most of Heinlein's work is in the topmost rank of modern s-f, it's always surprising when a new novel of his turns out to be a weak one. But it's even more jarring to re-read one of his early books and find that it has aged badly. *"Methusaleh's Children"* stands revealed now as a disjointed and episodic novel, meandering along for 60,000 words and coming to a halt. It doesn't stack up against the real best of Heinlein.

THE PUPPET MASTERS, by Robert A. Heinlein. Signet, 35¢.

Here's Heinlein of a later vintage—a novel written a decade after "Methusaleh's Children" and serialized in *Galaxy*—which shows him at the top of the form that won him his reputation. In *"The Puppet Masters"* Heinlein takes a whiskery theme—the invasion of Earth by loathsome parasitic beings from space—and turns it into something convincing, exciting, and compellingly readable. The book crackles with excitement. The first-person narration enables Heinlein to get his familiar protagonist across easily and effectively. And a million tiny details show how completely Heinlein has visualized his situation.

Except for a revamped jacket cover and a new photo

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of Heinlein, this paperback edition is identical to the out-of-print one published by Signet in 1952. Doubleday published the hardcover version.

WALDO: GENIUS IN ORBIT, by Robert A. Heinlein. Avon, 35¢.

Heinlein *again*. The "genius in orbit" tag is evidently tacked onto this edition to capitalize, if possible, on space-satellite publicity; since it's an accurate description of the hero of the first of the two novellas comprising the volume, it's not an objectionable title change.

This new Avon item is a reprint of the 1950 Doubleday hardcover called *"Waldo and Magic Incorporated"*. "Waldo," circa 1942 in *Astounding*, is the first-rate tale of the overweight genius with a knack for gadgetry. It's fine reading all the way—the 30,000-word length keeps it from the usual construction flaws common to Heinlein novels—and the excursion into psionics is interesting, in view of the recent trend toward psionic-machine stories.

The second half of the book is the novella called "Magic, Incorporated," which was titled "The Devil Makes the Law" when it appeared in *Unknown* in 1940. It's pure fantasy in the *Unknown* tradition, than which there is no more fantastic. The technique is to take the utterly outre and treat it in an absolutely straightfaced mundane fashion; the humor in this type of story rises out of incongruity, as in this case, where magic and demonology are placed on a business level. It's good fun all the way, though people lured by the retitling to expect sputnik stories are apt to be disappointed.

Nominations Accepted

The record shows that quite a few stories published in ***Future*** and ***Science Fiction Quarterly,*** back in the war years were very popular; and most of those issues are hard to obtain, as your editor has discovered. Would you like to see some more of them in our pages? If so, send in your nominations. We'll follow your wishes!

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DOWN TO EARTH

CALLING DR. HOOPER

Dear RAWL:

Having just finished your latest issue of *Future Science Fiction,* I feel impelled to write as a method of saying thanks for a great issue. I do not remember when I have so thoroughly enjoyed a story such as "Signs of the Time". How real to life can any Author get? This was the very problem which existed on the Miss. State University campus only last year. The solution was the same also; so if Brent Howell was here, I know where the story started.

"The Race Into Space" was also quite interesting. I would like to obtain information about the Anti-Gravity work and experiments of Dr. William J. Hooper. Several students, including myself, have been working on Anti-Gravity using the same basic principle. Insofar as our work with the series of rotating magnetic fields is concerned, we have found that there is something definitely to it.

Where could measuring instruments be obtained?

What is the address of Dr. William J. Hooper.

If it is at all possible, I would appreciate an answer about this matter.

HORACE M. IVY III,
Box 2092,
State College, Miss.

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I'll have to pass your questions —to Mr. Howell, and about Dr. Hooper, as well as the one on measuring—to better-informed readers.

THIRD LINE

Gentlemen:

Please pardon the third party (me!) but have not *both* you and Mr. Kyle made the same erroneous assumption: that an infinite purpose be either changeable or unchangeable?

To me, it seems that if it were either, it would have to be less than infinite.

Is it not "not-changeable" and equally "not-unchangeable" in the sense that these words (with this definitely finite implications) simply cannot be applied?

With great respect to you both, I am

Yours most sincerely,
HAROLD G. HENDERSON,
158 East 78th Street,
New York 21, NY

My apologies if I gave the impression that I considered the infinite purposes of God as either changeable or unchangeable, in the way you state it. And I agree entirely that finite words cannot express the infinite.

In the last analysis, we can only speak in very loose analogies, for even when most nearly correct we "see in a glass a darkly" (or, as the Goodspeed translation of 1 Corinthians 13: 12, has St. Paul say, "For now we are looking at a dim reflection in a mirror...") So, within our finite manner of defining, we can only say that in this and this respect the infinite purpose is unchangeable; yet, in that and that respect, it changes. Were either "changeable" or "unchangeable" to be absolutely adequate as definitions, then not only would the infinite become finite—but it would no longer offer any valid explanation of our own experience.

Absolute "unchangeability" would mean absolute determinism —where nothing is inevitable except that which actually happens. In other words, we are all puppets —our every action, reaction, thought, feeling, etc., was absolutely decreed from the beginning, and free will is a myth. Absolute "changeability" would mean chaos, where anything *might* follow some sort of order for any length of time; but was just as likely to change abruptly at any time. Something like the situation in Jack Vance's "The Men Return". (The weakness in the story was that since what Vance describes as happening at the end of the story could just as easily have happened at any other time—or not at all—it's obvious that it happened when it did only because the author decided to make it happen then.)

Mr. Kyle: since I've devoted a full page, double-space to this reply, I'll gladly allow you equal space for yours.

CLASSIC DIVISION

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

I greatly admired your answer to the gentleman who wished to classify science fiction. I thought you might be interested in a little reference in an article by Anthony

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Nemetz of Ohio State University (*Specimens:* January 1959, p. 83, 11 15-18 and footnote) to the division of literature by Isidore of Seville (560-636 AD) into "true fact", "possible happenings which dialectical argument and analysis can supply" and "impossible happenings which are the content of fables".

Obviously (if we follow St. Isidore), if science fiction is to be inserted in one of his classes, it will find its definition under "possible happenings which dialectical argument and analysis can supply". However, I hasten to add that, in my opinion, if science fiction is to amount to anything as interesting reading matter, authors should become familiar with the great masters of characterization—men like Sienkiewicz, Shakespeare, Homer, Dickins, Thackery, etc.

Even C. S. Lewis doesn't seem to produce anything as convincing as the Zagloba of Sienkiewicz, or the Falstaff of Shakespeare. Of course, the best is the enemy of the good: we cannot expect much science fiction if only perfection is printed; but what I want to say is that more effort in the direction of flesh and blood characterizations

[*Turn To Page* 122]

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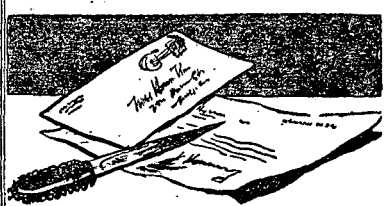

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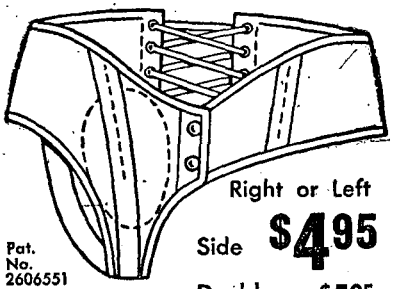

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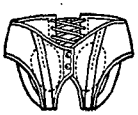

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should provide more interesting reading. Even the Dickinsian tendency to caricature is better than the prevalent illusion that characters are humanized by reducing them to the common sewer of complacent immorality.

ALAN C. BATES,
922 W. Fullerton Ave.,
Rm 14,
Chicago 14, Illinois

I'll go along—but with the amendment that what you say science fiction needs in order to be interesting literature is just what every other form of fiction needs. The "common sewer of complacent immorality" has, alas, been gurgling along its noisome way about as long as recorded human history; but only in the last few hundred years has it become, in the minds of writers and the public, the proper vehicle for valid "characterization".

Not that it was unknown before the secularization of Christendom, but that such depiction was a rarity, presented to satirize and shock by its departure from the norm of literary treatment. Petronius wouldn't have made much of a stir if everyone had been writing that way all along.

OOPS—WRONG LEWIS!

Dear Bob:

Thank you very much for those kind words about my A CASE OF CONSCIENCE in your April issue. If I have one quibble, it is that your remarks leave me with the

[*Turn To Page* 124]

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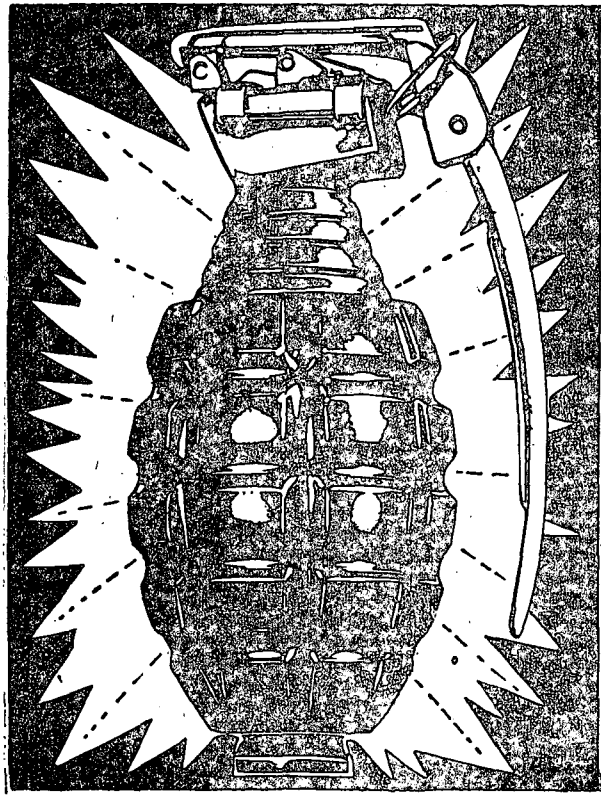

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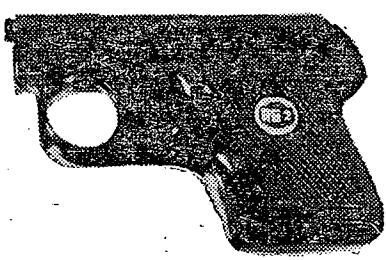

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vague feeling that the yarn appeared in a 1929 *Amazing Stories Quarterly*. Could we say for the record that the novel is available right now from Ballantine Books, for a paltry 35 cents?

Incidentally I don't think you mean the C. Day Lewis trilogy, but the C. S. Lewis trilogy. Day Lewis is the poet, C. S. is the scholar and novelist.

JAMES BLISH

WHAT IS A NATURAL LAW?

Dear RAWL:

Future SF, No 43, June 59. The cover was cute. Better than Virgil's usual *Fantastic Universe* work.

Stories were on a high level, much better than recent issues. I'm not sure just how to rate the first two. Both "Survival in Parallel" and "Love and the Stars—Today" were good treatments of used themes. I think Mathieu gets the nod for a more original handling.

1. "Survival in Parallel"—Mathieu. 2. "Love and the Stars — Today" — Wilhelm. Kate Wilhelm has a way of taking a worn idea and writing freshly about it, without gimmicks or twists. It's as though the idea hadn't been

[*Turn To Page* 126]

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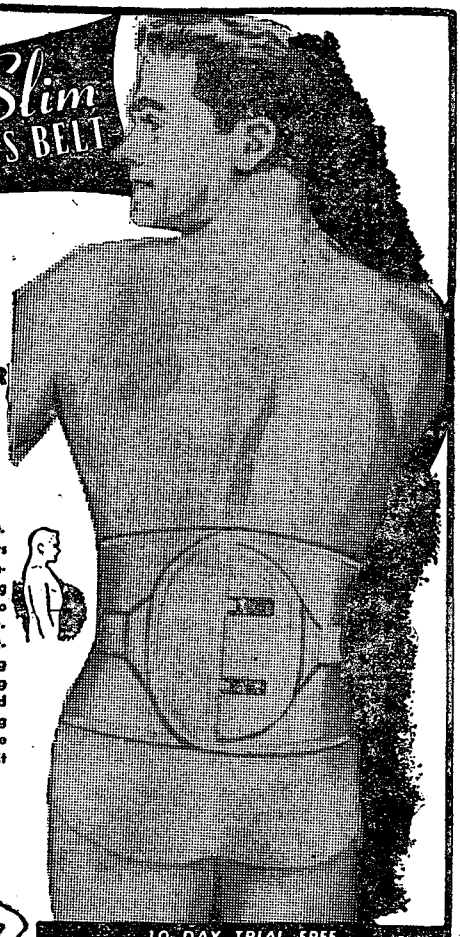

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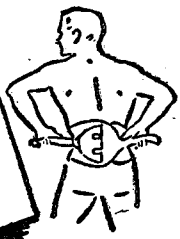

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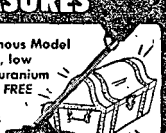

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used before. She has talent.

3. "Signs of the Times"—Howell. I thought this one amusing. 4. "Obey that Impulse"—Harris. Also amusing.

5. "And then He Went Away"—Westlake. Ending could have been predicted. This is the kind of story that should have continuity illustration by Jack Davis. It's just right for Harvey Kurtzman. 6. "Flame of Life"—Long. Smooth writing, presaging the purple mist through which Long has been writing ever since. But the concept is indigestible. Sorry, Bob, but it doesn't wear.

Aside to Richard Kyle: What is a natural Law? Go ahead, really put your finger on it and define it without resorting to operational definitions. (Example: "What is time. Time is what you measure with a clock. What is a clock? An instru-

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ment to measure time." Don't laugh. This actually is—simplified a bit—the definition on which our laws of mechanics are based.) Until you do this, don't try to separate sf and fantasy on the basis you are using.

My question: Why must one put a label on each little department of fiction? The difference between a science-fiction story and a fantasy (narrow sense) is the feeling an editor gets on reading it. How many tales in the past have been published as sf, only to have the readership come howling down on the editor's neck about that horrible fantasy stuff he was printing?

By the way, the most enjoyable rip-roaring of adventures of them all are pure fantasy, from beginning to end. And I am sure Doc Smith and Kim Kinnison would be the first to admit it.

The trouble is that people keep thinking of fantasy in terms of trolls and sorcery, and sf in terms of machines and technology. And yet, Heinlein and Hubbard have made perfectly acceptable science fiction stories out of magic

[*Turn Page*]

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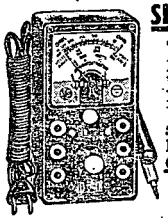

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(Even I have made an attempt at it; the approach I used would generally be considered scientific), and Ray Bradbury's Martian tales, generally accepted as sf, are among the most finely wrought fantasies of contemporary fiction.

But the point is, why label? In a field as vital and fluid as fiction writing, it is silly to insist that a story be one thing or another; this is in essence what you do when you try to define categories. The writer generally knows what he is writing; and if his story is salable, it will usually find its way to the right market. Sometimes an editor guesses wrong, as I've mentioned, but it would appear that, in the main, the readers authors, and editors have agreed on what is what for the past twenty years without forcing the material into rigid molds.

If we had always assumed that sf and fantasy were distinct and opposed, we would never have "The Roaring Trumpet", "Typewriter

[*Turn To Page* 130]

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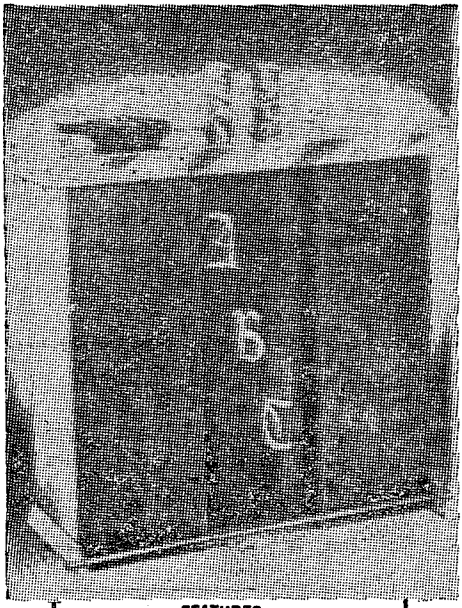

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in the Sky", "Operation Afreet", "...And the Moon Be Still as Bright", or, for that matter, the *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction.*

J. MARTIN GRAETZ,
32 Fayette Street,
Cambridge 39, Mass.

I think that most of us who are interested in trying to find a sure-fire differentiation between science fiction and fantasy want it for a tool when talking about science fiction to the uninitiate. Particularly in times when anything is likely to be labelled "science fiction" by ignorant or uncaring publishers and ad writers. This is not to denigrate fantasy. Personally, I don't object too much if an occasional science fiction tale is labelled fantasy—but when fairy tales (for children or adults) are called science fiction...! That's when you hear a howl from RAWL.

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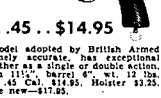

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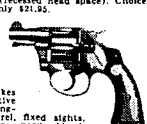

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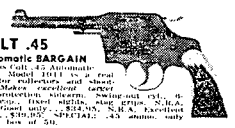

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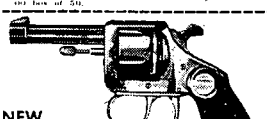

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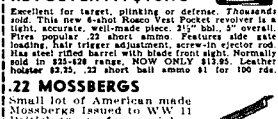

.22 MOSSBERGS

Small lot of American made Mossbergs issued to WW II British troops for special training. Bores British Royal Proof House marks.

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